We wish you a galloping exciting New Year!

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

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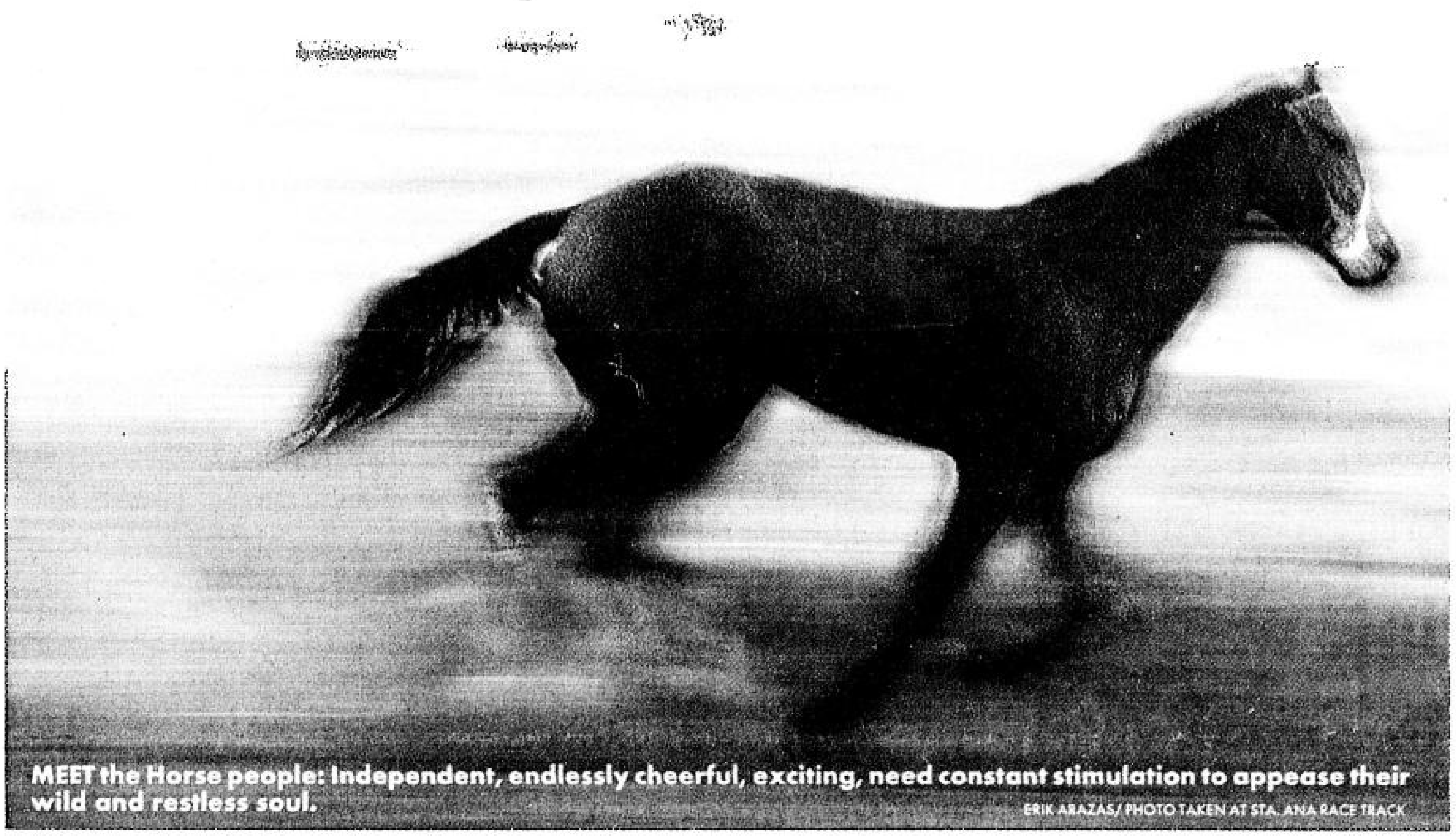
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2002 ★ 38 PAGES 4 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 24 P15

No plots, Ping assures AFP

9 detained Navy men could face court martial, says Corpus



MEET the Horse people: Independent, endlessly cheerful, exciting, need constant stimulation to appease their wild and restless soul.

ERIK ARAZAS/ PHOTO TAKEN AT STA. ANA RACE TRACK

By Carlito Pablo,
Cynthia D. Balana
and Martin Marfil

SEN. PANFILO Lacson has assured Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes that he and his former subordinates in the Philippine National Police and the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) are not involved in any moves to destabilize the Macapagal administration.

"Let me assure you that my adherence to the Constitution remains and any effort to destabilize this government will not come from my end or from any of my former subordinates," Lacson said in a Dec. 29 letter to Reyes.

Lacson wrote Reyes a day after Lt. Senior Grade Don Anthony Miraflor, former head of the disbanded Special Reaction Unit of the Navy's Special Warfare Group (SWAG), was arrested for illegal possession of a huge cache of explosives. Eight other former members of the SRU, which was under the PAOCTF when the task force was headed by Lacson, were also arrested.

But Reyes said Miraflor was not arrested in connection with the explosives, according to Lacson.

"I take your verbal assurance that the technical arrest of Lt. Miraflor was not, in any way, in connection with the possession of explosives...

NO PLOTS/ A7

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

THE HORSEY set at Wright Park, Baguio.

Lonely soldiers, rebels pine for home, peace

By Ma. Kristina E. Cassion
PDI Mindanao Bureau

FOR 33 YEARS now, a brutal war has been waged by two Filipino armies—the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the New People's Army (NPA).

Behind newspaper reports of ambuscades, raids and gains and losses in the battlefield are combatants who pine for families they left behind, who grieve for the death of their comrades and who long for peace.

These feelings become more intense this holiday season.

"Soldiery is a lonely life for we are away from our families, but we overcome this problem because we have chosen this way of life," said Lt. Col. Manuel Luis Ochotorena, chief of the 20th Infantry Battalion, which is based in Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte.

Ochotorena, who has been with the AFP for 20 years, is married to a Basileña and is blessed with two children. He was not able to visit his family for the Christmas Day celebration, but he vowed to be with his family on New Year's Day.

But other government soldiers are not as fortunate as Ochotorena. Though the AFP has granted holiday breaks for soldiers to spend time with their families for six days, those who live in faraway Luzon cannot easily avail themselves of this luxury because of the cost.

A six-day vacation is too short and too expensive, according to some of the soldiers.

Fortunately, the cell phone technology has reached these soldiers.

"Sometimes I feel bad being away. My child once called me asking for me to go home since they are lonely without me. But my wife,

LONELY/ A11

Get a kick from 2002, Year of the Horse

WILL you place your bet on 2002, the Year of the Water Horse?

Will the economy finally gallop toward prosperity? Will the Filipino's struggle for a better life finally go on a brisk pace, or continue to lumber on like the rickety *kalesa*?

Insights, predictions, and permutations gathered by the Inquirer on what 2002 holds according to the Chinese zodiac were spectral yet illuminating; fanciful but always hopeful

According to psychic consultant/radio anchor Zenaida Simbulan, the new year will see the country drawing more of its wealth from Nature, horse being a land animal, and Filipinos getting more immersed in matters emotional and spiritual.

Bits and pieces picked up by the Inquirer from the Internet say "Horse" years under the Chinese lunar calendar had been marked by high levels of activity, being "notorious historical turning points."

Indeed, past Horse years saw the world caught in major upheavals

GET/ A11

Mikey-Angela romance sizzles in chilly Baguio

By Gobleth Moulic
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—They sizzled in the chilly "Honeymoon Capital" of the country.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's eldest son, Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, and international business graduate Angela Montenegro, made an oh-so romantic pair while they spent their holidays here.

On Saturday, Mikey's father, Mr. Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, told INQ7.net that President Macapagal wants to have the traditional *pamamanhikan* on Feb. 14.

Defying a traditional Filipino belief, the couple is set to take the marital plunge this year.

MIKEY-ANGELA/ A11

HOW SWEET it is for Mikey Arroyo and Angela Montenegro to be in love and planning their wedding early next year.

E.V. ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Political museum: Looking back to know who we are

By Blanche S. Rivera

"OF COURSE, they (leaders now) may really be nationalistic but the circumstances under which they work are affecting their decisions. It will take a lot of Bonifacio, a lot of Mabini in them not to bow to pressures."

A good lesson to learn on New Year's Day from the National Historical Institute's (NHI) consultant for the first national museum on Philippine political history.

Consultant Ferdinand Llanes observed that "the government has had a big problem with honor in recent years. We invite people to look back because honor has always been inculcated in our heroes. We need it to be critical, to progress."

The museum, unveiled in time for Jose Rizal's 105th death anniversary the other day, tells the history of the country's government from the baranganic confederation, to the Katipuneros' revolts against the Spaniards, to the birth of the first Republic and much later, to the Filipino masses' ouster of two abusive presidents. The seed of a nation thus nurtured, has surfaced and resurfaced to protect the legacy of our heroes.

Now, 400 years later, the same spirit of broth-

POLITICAL/ A11

Gov't reassures 'Sona' boys: We'll help you

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE DEPARTMENT of Social Welfare and Development yesterday assured the three Payatas boys and Mang Pandoy of continued assistance by the government until they "gain economic and social power."

DSWD Secretary Dinky Soliman made the assurance after families of the children said their condition had turned from bad to worse since the boys appeared at President Macapagal's State of the

GOV'T/ A7

Miriam's fearless forecast: GMA vs Erap in 2004

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

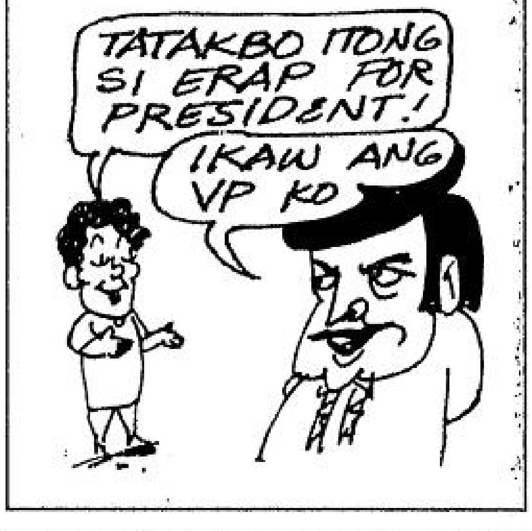
GMA vs Erap in 2004.

This is the fearless forecast of former Sen. Miriam Santiago, who said ousted President Joseph "Erap" Estrada is qualified to seek reelection to the country's highest post unless he is convicted of plunder charges before the 2004 elections.

"It will be (President Gloria Macapagal) Arroyo against Estrada in 2004. (Former President Fidel) Ramos is just playing his own game (and is not likely to run)," Santiago said in a phone interview with the Inquirer.

If this happens, she said, the Philippines will once more become a showcase for the world.

MIRIAM'S/ A7


TATAKBO ITONG SI ERAP FOR PRESIDENT!
IKAW ANG VP KO

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Second FRONT PAGE

Tiahrt arrives, asks to be taken to Basilan

ZAMBOANGA CITY—US Congressman Todd Tiahrt arrived in this southern city Monday on a mission to secure the freedom of American missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham from the Abu Sayyaf terror group, officials said.

Tiahrt, a Republican representing Kansas, the Burnhams' home state, arrived at Edwin Andrews Airbase here at 12:30 p.m. on board a private jet and was met by Philippine officials led by Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and top military officials.

He was accompanied by 11 other US officials and was immediately whisked off to the Southern Command headquarters here under heavy security.

Officials said Tiahrt had requested permission to travel to nearby Basilan island to personally assess the operations being conducted by some 5,000 Filipino soldiers to rescue the Burnhams, who have been in the terrorists' hands since they were kidnapped from a beach resort in May last year.

The Burnhams and Filipino nurse Deborah Yap are the last of the hostages seized by the Abu Sayyaf in a kidnapping spree last year.

Another kidnapped American, Guillermo Sobero of California, was beheaded by the group, along with more than a dozen Filipino hostages.

Southcom chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu said Tiahrt was expected to urge the Philippine government to allow US forces to join the rescue operations.

Cimatu said it was up to the President to allow US troops in but the AFP was capable of eventually rescuing the hostages.

"That is a political decision, but our soldiers are capable of rescuing the hostages. It's just a matter of time," Cimatu said.

Training

US military advisers have reportedly been training Filipino troops and providing them with equipment in the war against the Abu Sayyaf, a small rebel-cum-bandit group with links to international terrorist Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida terror network.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is scheduled to meet with Tiahrt on Tuesday, had earlier ruled out American troops joining actual combat operations.

Secretary Reyes said Tiahrt arrived here to assess the Philippine military's efforts to rescue the Burnham couple.

"There is strong (US) domestic pressure for him to come here and do something about the Burnhams," Reyes told reporters at Southcom headquarters.

Col. Francisco Gudani, Southcom deputy chief for operations, said Tiahrt's main objective was to "make sure the budget for the continuing US training and assistance program (for Filipino troops) was properly being used by the Armed Forces of the Philippines."

Inventory

Gudani said Tiahrt is the US Congress' budget committee chair and he was here to inventory the military equipment donated by the US to the Philippines, as well as to ensure that "US soldiers were properly training Filipino troops on the effective use of the equipment."

Tiahrt and the other US officials were also met by Jusmag chief in the Philippines Col. Steven Moores, US Marine Col. Micheal Regneor and US attaché Col. Russel Lowey.

Filipino militants, however, yesterday branded Tiahrt's proposal to allow American troops to rescue the Burnhams as a cover-up for the US government's plan to reestablish military bases in the country.

Alibis

"The US government is just using the hostage crisis as an alibi. Something sinister is behind this outrageous deal," Rodolfo Sambajon, national chair of Pamalakaya, said in a statement.

Sambajon said, "The Bush administration is adamant about clinching basing rights in 2002 in the Philippines and the entire Asian region."

The US government shut its military bases in the Philippines in 1991 after the Philippine Senate terminated the RP-US military bases agreement.

The President had earlier rejected Tiahrt's proposal, saying it was not the best option at this time.

Afghanistan

Sambajon said allowing American troops to rescue the Burnhams in the jungles of Basilan would transform the tiny island into "a little Afghanistan."

"Imagine 7,000 government troops going after a bandit group of 70 to 80 people; then US troops come in with a rescue mission—it is phenomenally absurd and ridiculous," Sambajon said.

"While we share the American people's sentiment at wanting their citizens rescued, we strongly condemn the US government's cruel, senseless and praetorian proposal," the statement said.

Pamalakaya information office Gerry Albert Corpuz, for his part, challenged President Macapagal to hold fast to her original position on Tiahrt's proposal.

"What America wants, America gets. No president of this country has ever dared to go against the whims of the US government. We challenge the Macapagal administration to break this subservience and uphold the sovereign rights of the Filipino people," he said.

Messages

'Let us go beyond personal interests and concentrate in moving our country forward.'

MY COUNTRYMEN, I join all of you in celebrating the coming of a new year!

As we welcome the year 2002, Let us thank the Lord for the year that has gone by, with all the blessings and trials it has given us, let us thank Him that the Philippines is the home of the great Filipino worker and let us seek His guidance to gain the courage to face the challenges that lie ahead.

The year 2001 saw our country undergo a successful and peaceful transition in the administration of government, slowly but surely. We resumed building the national edifice upon a foundation of good governance and according to our overcharging plan of improving the lives of ordinary Filipinos. While we have surpassed many difficulties in the process of healing and rebuilding. There is still a lot that has to be done, there remain daunting challenges but we have the great Filipino worker to lead the way in overcoming these challenges.

This new year, let us continue to hope and work for a better future. Let us pursue with renewed zeal and resolve the worthy objectives we have set for ourselves the past year. Let us all make this commitment to our families, our children and ourselves, let us go beyond personal interests and concentrate in moving our country forward toward greater peace progress and prosperity for the most number of our people.

Maraming pagsubok ang naghihintay sa atin. Sama-sama nating malalampasan ang lahat ng ito kung patuloy ang ating pagsisikap at pagtitiwala sa ating mga sarili at sa Poong Maykapal. Sa pamamagitan ng ating pagkakaisa, pagtutulungan at sa gabay ng Panginoon, matatamo natin ang mas mapayapa at masaganang kinabukasan.

Muli kong binabati, kasama ng aking asawa at mga anak, ang sambayanang Pilipino lalo na ang dakila ng manggagawang Pilipino ng isang manigong bagong taon!

Mabuhay tayong lahat!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President of the Philippines

'We have a job to do. Let us not despair.'

LESS partisan politics—more resolute performance, the government faces many challenges. It places modernization of agriculture, information technology communication, tourism, housing, peace and order—and the overriding alleviation of poverty—as priority goals embodied in various programs and projects.

But since our most vital resource is the Filipino—perhaps we should tend to his basic needs foremost. Many are jobless—and when we need to undertake a public chore or build a simple farm to market road—we should give priority to men, not machines. Government should pump prime to perk the economy. Housing is the great multiplier but we ask the private sector to pursue government's pump priming—including support for the needed secondary market, so that housing can continue successfully.

We in government must perform. Not in words but in deeds, not in propaganda but in positive accomplishments. The challenges are awesome, the task extremely difficult. But as Franklin Delano Roosevelt proclaimed in America's darkest hour of depression—"we have a job to do. Let us not despair. The only thing to fear is fear itself."

Teofisto Guingona
Vice President of the Philippines

'We look forward in hope. We envision the break of a new dawn.'

I join the whole nation in welcoming the year 2002. The past year has been monumental and unforgettable in Philippine history. We witnessed our democracy put to test and public trust in government restored. We realized that we could not remain blind and deaf to the legitimate clamor of the *masa*. We saw how violence and conflict afflicted our nation, especially the innocent ones. With the whole world, we were gripped with fear by the evils of terrorism, yet we became united in the cause for solidarity and peace. With its lights and shadows, the year 2001 is still a year of grace for us Filipinos.

And so we look forward in hope. We envision the break of a new dawn. This is because our God is the God of history. Our God is a loving, just and peaceful God. He is the ultimate victor of history. He will give us His love. He will give us His peace.

However, peace cannot be established without justice, while authentic human development is impossible without justice and peace. With peace, the human heart is freed to begin weaving the net of human solidarity. Peace dissipates evil and negates its strength. It allows people to be truly alive and actually experience happiness.

As with anything of beauty and value, peace thrives when cherished and protected. Peace becomes a reality through a multitude of concrete acts of justice and of attentiveness toward one's neighbor, however different from us. Differences in religion, economic status, political affiliation and ethnic identity are therefore not barriers to peace. Neither are they justifications to sow hatred and animosity. We are all called upon to be peacemakers. As Filipinos, we are asked to do our share in standing up for what is right and true on the road to peace. As Christians, we know that Jesus is with us in our works on behalf of peace. We are not alone. God is with us!

Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, D.D.
Archbishop of Manila.

Speedy Erap trial, wage hike on militants' wish list

By Christian V. Esguerra

A LONG list of wishes, if not demands, were what President Macapagal-Arroyo got in return from militant and civil society groups for the New Year.

Yesterday, after the President revealed her New Year wish list, which were mostly for the well-being of her family, the civil groups said they hoped for a speedy trial for ousted President Joseph Estrada, a P125 wage increase, the return of the disputed coco levy funds to coconut farmers, and a better peace and order situation in 2002.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan called for a "speedy, fair and public trial" of the jailed president and the prosecution of corrupt public officials.

Bayan, which played a key role in the popular revolt that ousted Estrada last January, listed 10 New Year wishes, the first of which was a call for a meaningful anniversary celebration of the People Power revolution.

This year's celebration will be particularly significant as the nation would be commemorating not just one, but two popular uprisings that toppled two presidents in 15 years.

Bayan also wished for the resumption of the peace negotiations between the government and the communist-led National Democratic Front, and the release of political prisoners and prisoners-of-war as an "act of goodwill" on the part of government.

Included in the wish list was a call for government to redirect a large chunk of the national budget intended for debt service into social services.

The militant group also asked for more effective price controls with regard to basic commodities in the face of the economic downturn, and a halt to the planned wage cut for Filipino domestic helpers in Hong Kong.

In Congress, House minority leader Carlos Padilla said his own personal wish was for the President to travel less and focus more on domestic problems.

Padilla said that even if the President were to go on foreign trips to drum up foreign investor interest, it would be difficult to sell the country with its many problems such as garbage and the rise in kidnap-for-ransom activities, among others.

Only months after taking over from Estrada, Ms Macapagal has already made several trips abroad, mostly within Southeast Asia, to raise foreign investment.

But Padilla said the President should put a "wider focus" on the country's problems as he noted that Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was able to entice foreign investors not by travelling abroad but by improving the domestic situation.

One of the investors' foremost concerns about the country was the kidnapping problem, he said.

He said kidnapping cases had increased by 47 percent during the first semester this year, citing official reports received by the congressional budget and planning office.

The opposition leader said the "peace and order situation per se" in the country needed to be improved and not just the perception of it.

The President said the other day that improving the perception of peace and order would be her main objective in the new year.

Padilla said that five countries have issued travel advisories against the Philippines.

"A travel advisory is a virtual warning that the country is not a safe place to visit," he said. *With a report from Christine Avendaño*

Factory blast kills 3, injures 6 in Laguna

CABUYAO, Laguna—Three laborers were killed and six others were critically injured when a gas-loaded factory septic tank owned by Fastech Electronic exploded at the Light Industrial Science Park of the Philippines, Barangay Diezmo here, police said yesterday.

The names of the three who died instantly were not immediately available, Supt. Benjamin A. Belarmino Jr., of the police regional office, said.

An unidentified Cabuyao policeman said the victims werer burned beyond recognition, making it difficult to identify them.

Belarmino said the victims, who were sub-contract workers for Consproc Water Proofing, whose principal contractor is People's Asia Pacific Construction, had been painting the walls of the factory basement when the explosion occurred.

The factory's management and the Cabuyao police are conducting an investigation.

In Tuba, Benguet, three children were killed while 19 others were hurt when the passenger jeepney they were riding in hit the iron railing of the Marcos Highway in Barangay Taloy Sur there on Monday.

Police identified the fatalities as Mitos Menzi, 10; Leonides Tanacio, 7 and Marcela Tanacio, 10, all of Itogon, Benguet. The three were cousins, police said. *Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Burea*

Japan to push alliance with Asean

JAPAN will propose an action plan to form a comprehensive economic alliance, which would include free trade accords, with the members of Asean, a daily reported Monday.

The proposal will be made by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi when he visits five Association of Southeast Asian Nations member-countries in early January, the Yomiuri Shimbun said, quoting government sources.

The Japanese government expects to hold a working level meeting in late January with its Asean counterparts to begin drawing up the action plan, the mass-circulation daily said.

Tokyo hopes the alliance could be launched in five to 10 years, the newspaper said.

The plan is part of Japan's effort to secure its economic position in Asia, where China is fast making its presence felt, by speeding up dialogue with Asean members, the daily said.

The action plan aims to clarify procedures in talks over the alliance by setting a range of cooperation among signed members and a deadline for its conclusion, the newspaper said.

Japan hopes the alliance would include free trade accords, mutual investment agreements, energy security treaties and a framework designed to protect intellectual property, it said.

Japan plans to call for official approval of the plan when Japanese and Asean leaders meet in Cambodia in late 2002, it said.

Japan had previously favored multilateral pacts in bodies such as the World Trade Organization, but is now shifting its focus to free trade accords.

In October, Japan and Singapore completed negotiations to launch a bilateral free trade accord, the first ever for the world's second-biggest economy..

Koizumi is to begin his trip to the five key Asean members—the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore—on Jan. 9, a foreign ministry official said. *AFP*

Hope fades of finding 2 UPLB students alive

NASUGBU, Batangas – Police have lost hope of finding alive two missing University of the Philippines-Los Baños students who were believed swept out to sea by strong waves at a beach resort here on Thursday.

Supt. Gaudencio M. Magsangkay, Nasugbu police chief, said strong currents may have carried Karen de la Cruz, 22, and Rowan Labo, 24, to shark-infested waters off Nasugbu.

Two companions of the missing, Symone Donacao, 21, UPLB student council president, and Cristina Quevedo, 21, were earlier found dead from drowning.

Rescuers found the body of Donacao in the shallow waters off Barangay San Diego River in Lian town, while Quevedo's body was recovered in Sitio Matuod, Barangay Binubusan, also in Lian, some five kilometers from this town. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Nation remembers Manuel Roxas

TODAY marks the 110th birth anniversary of the late Manuel A. Roxas, the fifth president of the Philippines.

Roxas, born in Capiz (now Roxas City) on Jan. 1, 1892 to Gerardo Roxas and Rosario Acuña, was a posthumous baby, his father having been killed by Spanish soldiers the April before.

He largely attended the public schools, completing his secondary education at the Manila High School (renamed Araullo High School), graduating with highest honors in 1909.

At the University of the Philippines College of Law, where he graduated in 1913, he again finished at the top of his class.

In the bar exams of that year, he received the highest grades among all candidates, making him the first top bar examinee in the Philippines.

Roxas went on to occupy more important positions in government than any other Filipino before him.

For 36 years, he held various public offices, beginning in 1917 as a member of the Capiz municipal council and culminating when he became president of the country.

ROXAS, fifth President of the Philippines

In between, he served as the youngest governor of his province from 1919 to 1922; was elected to the House of Representatives in 1922 where he became speaker for 12 years; became a member of the Constitutional Convention in 1934-1935, became secretary of Finance, and was chair of the National Economic Council and the National Development Co. and other government agencies.

He was also a brigadier general in the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) and a guerilla leader.

He was president of the Philippine Senate and the last president of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and the first president of the Republic in 1946.

Roxas founded Ang Bagong Katipunan, which taught lessons in national discipline and economic nationalism.

Justice Frank Murphy, first American High Commissioner in the Philippines, said he admired Roxas for his "extraordinary and singular ability."

Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmeña Sr. were his peers. Sen. Claro M. Recto extolled him as "a legend, a blazon of spiritual nobility, not only for the Filipino people and the Malay race, but for all humanity."

The late senate president Gerry Roxas was his son and the present secretary of Trade and Industry, Manuel A. Roxas II, his namesake, is his grandson.

Firecracker blasts, guns wound 72 in New Year run-up

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE patrols were stepped up yesterday ahead of raucous celebrations that already saw 72 people injured from firecrackers and gunfire in the days leading up to the new year, officials said Monday.

Interior Secretary Jose Lina said he had ordered increased patrols to prevent the number of injuries from rising.

Most of those hurt in the past week suffered burns and other injuries from deadly firecrackers, while two were hit by stray bullets, Lina said.

"Heavily frequented areas were under monitoring by police. Also, patrols roamed around those areas where historically there has been a high incidence of firecracker-related injuries," Lina said.

Lina said policemen caught firing their service firearms to greet the New Year would also be sacked and prosecuted.

"Again, we hope that the numbers will not go up any further," Lina said. "The ideal situation is that there are no firecracker injuries at all, but we are fighting tradition here which has been with us for many years."

Lina noted, however, that this year's initial figures appeared to be lower than the previous year, when one person was killed and at least 459 others were injured by firecrackers.

"We will do the best we can to contain the situation," Lina added.

Director Edgardo Aglipay, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said he would order a probe of all Metro Manila policemen who were found to have fired their guns to welcome 2002.

Yesterday, he asked the more than 10,000 policemen from the five police districts to submit their service firearms for inspection today to determine who among them fired their guns on New Year's Eve.

Aglipay had directed the policemen to tape the barrels of their guns and have the tape signed by their superiors in a bid to keep them from firing the guns.

"Those who were found to have fired their guns would be subjected to summary dismissal proceedings. They will also be slapped with criminal charges of alarm and scandal," he said.

Observers, however, noted that while the idea was novel, it would not stop the policemen from firing their other guns. Some policemen are believed to keep other firearms at home.

Aglipay was scheduled to go around the metropolis last night to check on policemen's compliance with his directive, as well as to monitor the peace and order situation.

He also warned security guards and civilians with guns that they faced criminal charges of alarm and scandal and revocation of their licenses, if they are caught firing their guns.

The NCRPO had urged the public to report to police anyone who fires a gun in their neighborhood.

Aglipay said policemen caught drinking on the job during the holidays would also be subjected to summary dismissal.

This, he said, was a violation of the directive of PNP chief Director Gen. Leandro Mendoza for policemen to be always alert.

The Department of Health had a more novel way of trying to convince young Filipinos not to set off firecrackers.

"The choice is theirs—light firecrackers and risk lose fingers or keep their fingers so they could continue with the pleasure of texting," said Dr. Ladislao Yuchongco Jr., head of the DOH's Health Emergency Management Staff.

"I bet they can't text with their feet," Yuchongco added.

For the first time yesterday, the DOH joined the text craze by spreading its "DOH advisory" through mobile phones.

One message went: "*Sandaling kasiyahan, habang buhay pagdurusahan. Umiwas sa paggamit ng paputok. Paano ka pa magttxt kung wala na ang daliri mo?* Pls pass." (A moment's pleasure, a lifetime of regret. Avoid using firecrackers. How could you text without fingers?)

In response, people also started sending out their own warnings, but with a comical twist.

One went: "Warning: *Huwag bumili ng Super Lolo, pabago-bago ng isip yan. Di alam kung Gina o Karen ang puputukan.*" (Don't buy a Super Lolo, it is constantly changing its mind, not knowing whether its Gina or Karen it wants to blow up.).

The message was an obvious spoof of the popular McDonalds hamburger commercial. ***Armand N. Nocum, AFP***

'Not my boy,' says pa on Jordanian's terror links

AMMAN, Jordan—The father of a Jordanian man arrested in the Philippines on suspicion of belonging to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network denied Sunday the accusations against his son.

"He is religious but he has no connection with any organization," Yousef al-Ghoul told AFP by telephone from his home in Zarqa, 30 kms east of Amman.

Hadi Yousef al-Ghoul, 35, was arrested last Thursday in Balanga, Bataan, after a three-month surveillance operation aided by United States intelligence operatives, according to Philippine police.

Police found explosives and materials used to make them, documents printed in Arabic and a "Taliban poem" declaring war against the US government, sources said.

"Initial reports indicate he is a member of the al-Qaida terrorist group," a police source said.

The father said his son had been arrested in Manila in 1994 on suspicion of possessing weapons and held for four years but was finally discharged.

"He knew that he was under police surveillance and would not have hidden explosives at his home if he really possessed them," he said, accusing Philippine authorities of planting the evidence.

"His arrest is linked to the international campaign against everything dealing with Islam," he added.

He called on lawyers and human rights groups to intervene to obtain the release of his son, a Jordanian citizen of Palestinian origin who went to the Philippines in 1986 and studied engineering before opening a store.

Ghoul married a Filipina and their two sons and a daughter live with their grandfather in Zarqa.

Kuwait's information minister, meanwhile, has denied that Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the man whose alleged participation in a plot to blow up US planes was uncovered when fire broke out in his apartment in the Philippines in 1995, was not Kuwaiti as the US Federal Bureau of Investigation and the European Union claimed.

Khalid Shaikh Mohammed is a Pakistani national who was born in Kuwait, the minister, Sheik Ahmed Fahd Al Ahmed Al Sabah, said in remarks published on Sunday.

People born in Kuwait do not automatically qualify for citizenship, Sheik Ahmed told Kuwaiti newspaper editors.

The FBI has offered $25 million for information leading directly to Mohammed's arrest. He is wanted for conspiring to blow up US passenger planes flying from Southeast Asia to America in 1995.

The US state department says the plot was uncovered after a fire broke out in Mohammed's apartment in Manila.

Mohammed, 36, is also given as a Kuwaiti national on a list issued by the European Union last week of people and groups wanted for terrorism. Neither the FBI's nor the EU's list gives an organization to which Mohammed belongs. ***AFP and AP***

Drilon bats for overseas workers' own hospital

WHO hasn't heard of overseas Filipino workers repatriated after suffering physical or mental illness contracted overseas?

Citing official statistics, Senate President Franklin Drilon said nearly half of repatriated OFWs return to the country needing medical attention or hospital confinement.

Many returning OFWs, he said, need psychological care and counseling to help them and their dependents cope with the trauma of a long separation.

Alarmed by the situation, Drilon said he is pushing for the establishment of a special hospital for OFWs, to be called the OWWA Migrant Workers Hospital.

OWWA, or the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, is the government agency charged with promoting and overseeing the welfare of some eight million OFWs.

"The present package of services under the Medical Care Program for OFWs and their dependents is limited to curative medical services," Drilon said in a statement.

"There is critical need to complement the present medical package to ensure total health care for OFWs and their dependents," he said.

OFWs remit to the country more than P5 billion a year.

"The least the government can do for these unsung heroes is to provide them with adequate medical care when they return home after working abroad for their families and their country. It's only just and right," Drilon said.

The proposed hospital, he said, would provide the following services to all OFWs who are OWWA contributors and their legal dependents:

- A total health care package to include preventive, promotive, diagnostic, curative and rehabilitative programs;
- Medical examinations on all departing OFWs with duly approved job orders;
- A system to effectively monitor the condition of patients and generate relevant information in aid of policy formulation.

BUSY VACATION. President Macapagal-Arroyo (center) participates in an Igorot dance with local officials during a visit to Banaue yesterday, near the end of her weeklong Christmas vacation in Baguio City. The week turned out to be hectic, however, with politics and the Abu Sayyaf intruding on her vacation. *(See lead story on page 2.)* REUTERS

PCGG owes foreign lawyers $1M

By Donna S. Cueto

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government is determined to pay next year at least $1 million in fees to foreign lawyers being retained to help the agency recover the alleged Marcos ill-gotten wealth stashed abroad.

For it to "accomplish its mandate" of recovering the billions that the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos reportedly illegally amassed and stashed abroad, the PCGG said "it must honor its legal fees."

"We have to pay our foreign lawyers who, more often than not, are paid by the PCGG only after long periods of time, at lengthy intervals and with much delay," a PCGG paper spelling out its goals for 2002 said.

The PCGG said it still owed $969,739.36 to three foreign law firms, and another 55,244.38 in Swiss francs to two other firms.

As of July 31, 2001, the PCGG owed its foreign lawyers a total of P54,107,743.41, or more than $1 million using the prevailing peso-dollar exchange rate.

The agency retains at least eight foreign law firms.

The PCGG owed the law firm of Sills, Beck and Cummins $18,629.27, or P1,005,980.58, as of July last year. It is paying a partner of the firm $295 an hour, an associate at $154 an hour, and a paralegal at $85 an hour of service.

This law firm was hired on Jan. 14, 1998 and continues to be active. It has handled cases involving the recovery of paintings and art work that the Marcoses had reportedly stashed abroad.

The law firm of Heller Ehrman White and McAuliffe, which was hired on Feb. 14, 1995 and is still being retained, also has to be paid $579,381.09, the equivalent of P31.3 million.

It represents the PCGG in human rights litigation in the US and in the case involving Walter Fuller Aircraft Sales. The firm's lawyers are being paid at the following rates: Steve Bomse, $350 an hour; G. Greer, $250 an hour; M. Harris, $150 an hour and assistance at $100 an hour.

The PCGG also has to pay the Swiss law firm of Fontanet, Salvioni, Leuenberger, originally hired by the first PCGG chair Jovito Salonga on Aug. 18, 1986, the amount of $371,759 as of July 31, 2001. This is equivalent to P20,074,986. The firm has been involved in the freezing and recovery of Marcos ill-gotten assets hidden in Switzerland. A partner of the firm is being paid $150 an hour for services.

The two other law firms still owed money are Badertscher Dorig & Poledna, hired on Jan. 7, 1994, which is claiming 49,684.38 Swiss francs as fees; and Frick & Partner, hired on Sept. 22, 1999, which has outstanding fees of 5,560 Swiss francs. Both are involved in the recovery of the assets reportedly illegally acquired by the Marcoses and their associates. A partner in the two firms is paid 500 Swiss francs an hour, while an associate is paid at the rate of 250 to 300 Swiss francs an hour.

The PCGG is also retaining at least two more law firms: Morgan & Morgan ($150 to $300 an hour), which was hired on May 2, 2000, to handle the Arelma Inc. accounts; and Munger, Tulles & Olson ($120 to $150 an hour), which was hired on July 28, 1986 and has been handling the California RICO case.

According to the PCGG plans for 2002, it will continue to retain its foreign lawyers and "hire additional ones if necessary."

That is why the PCGG needs "sufficient funding support," it said.

"The bulk of Marcos assets could be lying abroad waiting to be discovered," it said.

The agency has to "continuously look for and solicit legitimate and credible evidence and information to recover the Marcos ill-gotten wealth wherever (it is) located," it said.

The INQUIRER learned that among the Swiss lawyers being retained is Martin Kurer whom Australian independent investigator Reiner Jacobi and his lawyer David Chaikin have accused of conspiring with the Swiss banks fo hide the bulk of the Marcos loot from the Philippine government.

Kurer has the agency's confidence, the PCGG said.

Palace 'clearinghouse' churns out old news

THE PRESIDENT creates an "information clearinghouse" and all of a sudden rehashes of old and tired news stories about the "positive" aspects of the Macapagal administration begin appearing.

The "rehashed" press releases started issuing out of the Office of the Press Secretary a week ago.

As expected, Malacañang reporters ignored them as they were considered "old news."

But the OPS continues to churn them out.

Not a few wondered if this was the effect of the new layer in the information bureaucracy that the President had caused to be set up a couple of weeks ago.

In Memorandum Order No. 49 dated Dec. 13, the President ordered her Cabinet and heads of government agencies to "first coordinate" their press releases and advertisements with the new press undersecretary for broadcast, Manuel Sanchez.

Ms Macapagal said she wanted the government to "speak with one voice."

Some reporters said Malacañang, or somebody acting for it, might just be interested in controlling the release of information.

Sanchez, a former Rizal congressman, has no media background.

He is known to be close to Dante Ang, the President's personal publicist.

The rehashed stories were at least a week old, like the last Social Weather Stations survey which came out in the newspapers on Dec. 22.

Others were more than a month old, like the stories on the President's state visits and the reforms undertaken in the housing and financial sectors. ***Dona Pazzibugan***

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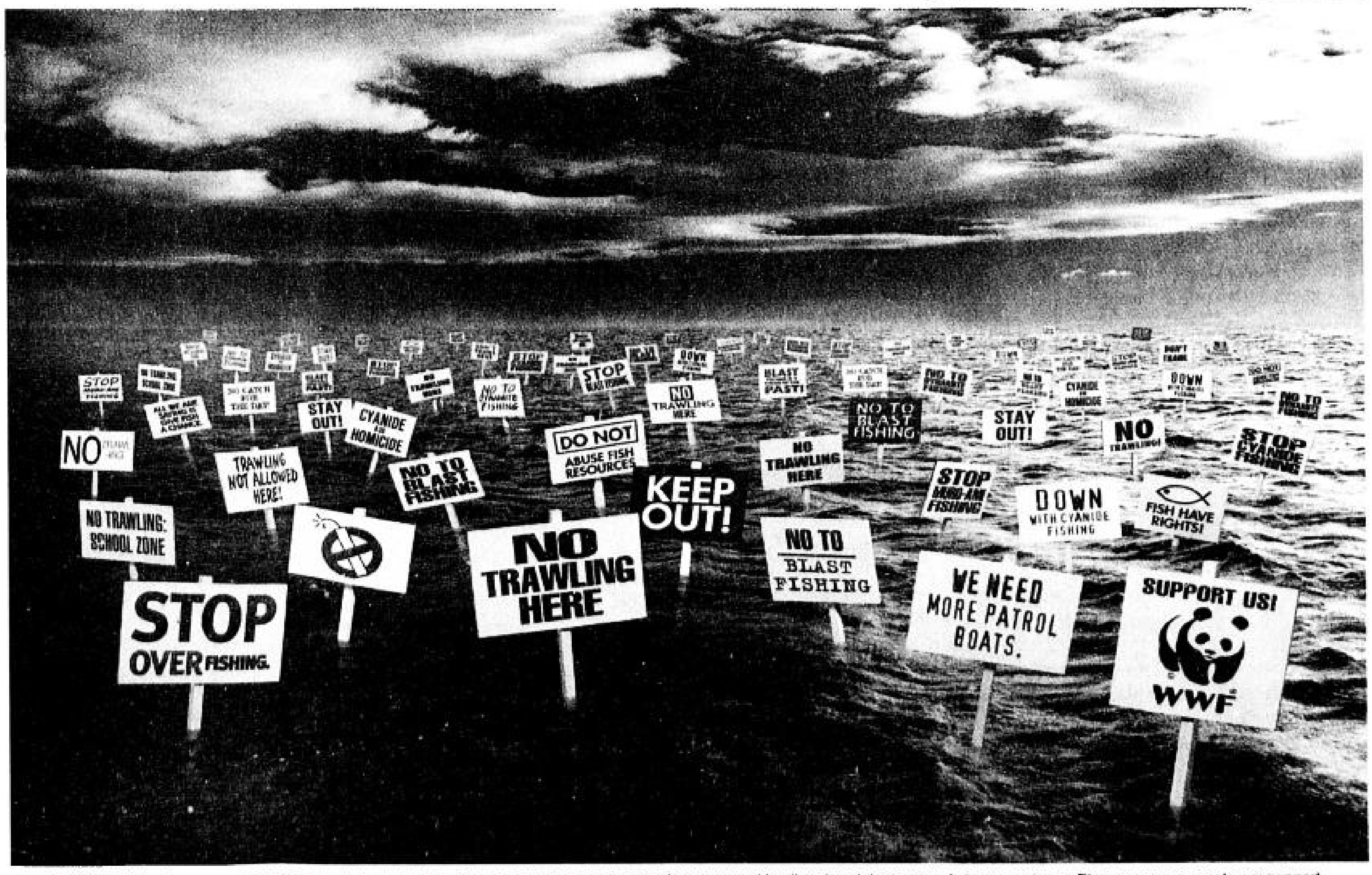

FISH RALLY. A massive protest action is being held in Philippine waters against the harm caused by illegal and destructive fishing practices The organisers need your support.

OPINION

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Vol. 17 No. 24
ISSN 0116-2642

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The PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati • P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati City, Philippines • Our new telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments; Editorial Fax 897-4793, 897-4794; Advertising 897-4807; Circulation 527-33-42, 527-33-48, 528-01-83, 528-01-86 and 528-02-13, Fax: 528-02-34.

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Give us a break

EDITORIALS

ALREADY, we are missing Christmas. That's bad enough without having to end the year with the un-Christmasy spectacle of the feuding and fussing of President Macapagal and former President Fidel Ramos. And for what? For who gets to be the ruling party's presidential candidate in 2004.

Give us a break, guys. Talk about leadership by example. The President, who has made the pursuit of peace her top priority in the coming year, appears hostile toward anyone who casts a "moist eye" on 2004. Ramos' conduct is unbecoming of an elderly statesman, which is how he bills himself.

Both the President and the former president comport themselves as though they have proprietary rights to the presidency. It's either he or she. All others, make way.

The Macapagal-Ramos standoff is a pointless exercise in one upmanship that can only serve to further divide a country that urgently needs a sense of nation. More than ever, this country with its bombardment of woes deserves to be led by a Filipino who will not stoop to petty fights to define his or her entitlements.

President Macapagal snubbed Ramos in Baguio. Worried partymates got the President and the former president together if only long enough for a photo op. The rift, as Speaker Jose de Venecia called it, was getting out of hand and threatened to split the ruling party only two years away from a presidential election.

The political rivals obliged, smiling the smiles that warmed the Baguio chill. But after it was over, she didn't play golf with him like she used to. And, Ramos, founder and chair emeritus of the Lakas-NUCD-UMDP, said he was not anointing a presidential candidate.

The President suspects that Ramos plans to replace her, and with good reason. People closely identified with Ramos have been throwing graft charges at Mr. Mike Arroyo and Ms Macapagal, in that order, ranging from a telecommunication franchise to the sweepstakes funds to the coco levy deal. Early on, these same people gave the President a deadline to clean up her act in six months or else...

The sensing in the Palace was that Ramos had unleashed his dogs of war. Of late, the man himself had been making a lot of noise for the Supreme Court to clarify a "gray area" in the constitutional ban against the reelection of former presidents. The catch is that the high court, according to constitutional experts, cannot make a ruling unless and until an ex-president actually runs in a presidential race. Which perfectly suits Ramos' purpose though he has denied he's running. Having said that often enough, Ramos also said that a test case is in order. Among the living ex-presidents, only Ramos is available for a test run. Cory Aquino is an icon for democracy to the world. It is unthinkable for her to return to being merely president of a country. As for Joseph Estrada, the way his cases are going at the Sandiganbayan, he will only be available for court appearances, if at all, for at least the next two years and beyond.

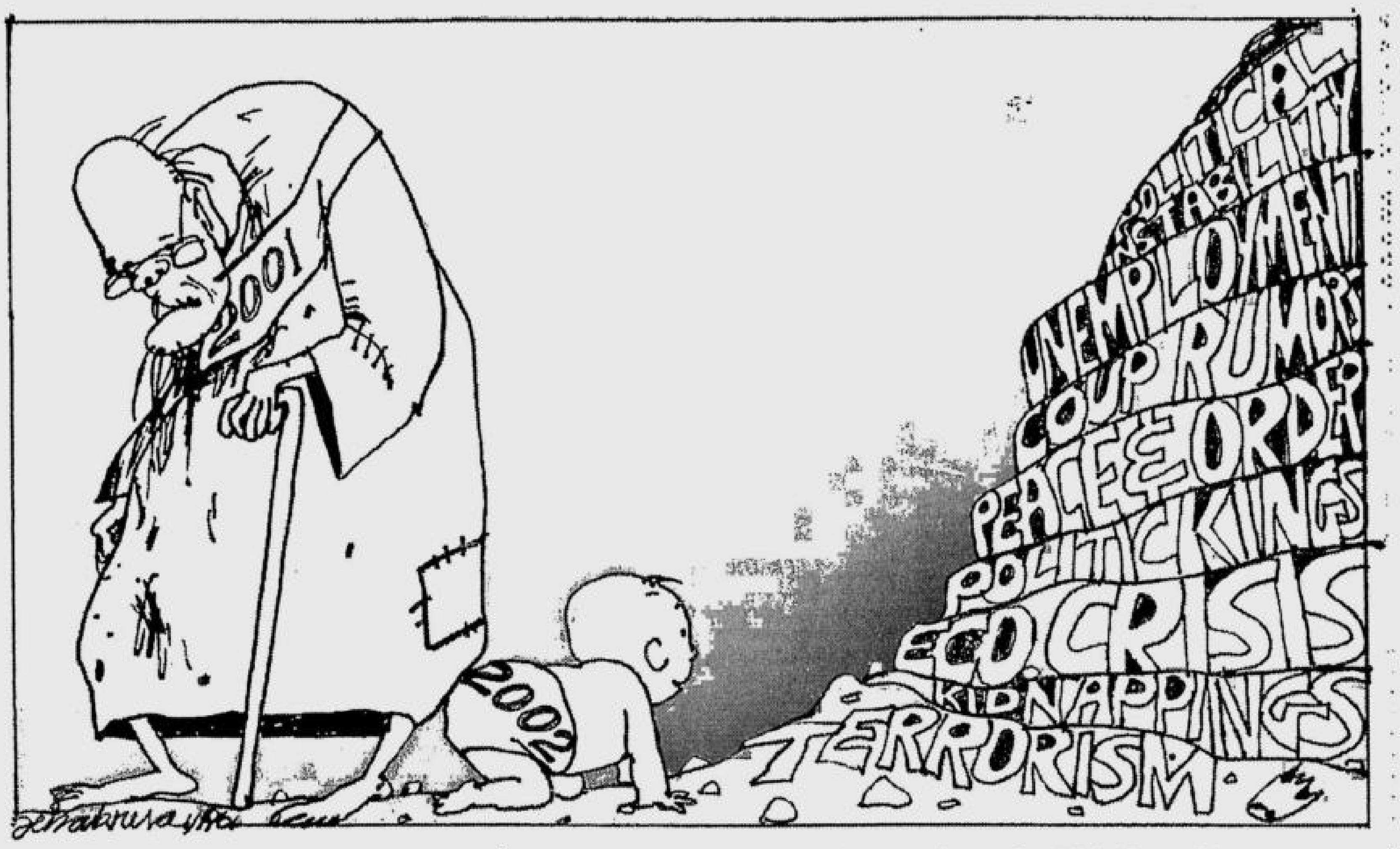
The INQUIRER has learned that Ramos has informed the leaders of his party of the alleged clamor of his people for him to retake the presidency. These people won't take no for an answer. How long can he hold out before he caves in to what he had reportedly claimed was a clamorous lobby?

Granting the clamor is there. Granting that the high court sheds light on the gray area and rules a former president like Ramos is eligible to run for the same office again. Why should a petulant Ms Macapagal take that against him? They can sit down and reason together like honorable men and women, like we expect our leaders to resolve their conflicted political ambitions. Ms Macapagal wants the party's anointment. So would Ramos. Let the party decide, and ultimately the people. That's how the game is played fair and square.

A leader like Guiliani

WERE that we had leaders like the "Mayor of the World," Rudy Guiliani. Our New Year wish is that people on the ground are making their leaders right now and that shortly they will emerge to startle us with qualities as inspiring as those of Guiliani. For his "acts of true leadership," Time Magazine chose the outgoing mayor of New York as its Person of the Year.

We sum up the qualities of a great leader as exemplified by Guiliani: "Raw emotion and tireless resolve...having more faith in us than we had in ourselves...brave when required and rude where appropriate and tender without being trite, not sleeping and not quitting and not shrinking from pain all around him...holds off despair long enough for the rest of us to get our balance, find our armor and join in to fight at his side...sounds realistic and optimistic at the same time. (The President's optimistic economic figures come to mind)...knows "the difference between information and inspiration and never substitutes one where the other is needed...gutsy decision maker, balancing security against symbolism...very human man (who) taught us (lessons) in superhuman courage."



Will GMA's New Year wishes be fulfilled?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IT is customary for people to make New Year's resolutions and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is no exception. On top of her wish list is that her husband Mike be free of the scandals that had hounded him in the past year. And that Mike would wear better-fitting pants.

But for the President's first wish to come true, it would be necessary for the First Gentleman to make one himself. And that is to resolve not to willfully seek public attention. Because I read in the newspapers a few days ago that he wants to resume his television and radio shows. He'd better give up the idea. They were what got him into trouble in the first place.

When a person who was not elected into office—such as the First Gentleman—tries to attract attention like a public official, he also attracts resentment. People consider him an interloper, a pretender, a *saling-pusa*. People think he doesn't deserve the recognition and respect due the officials who were duly elected into office. Even in the House of Representatives where all members are considered equal, sectoral representatives, when they were still appointed by the President, were looked upon as "second-class" congressmen. The same attitude toward Mike, sad to say, exists.

In the second place, Mike is not made to be a television and talk show host, much as he wants to be one. He does not have the voice or the personality for it. For such a big man, he has such a small voice, not in keeping with his big bulk. On the other hand, his wife Gloria, has such a big voice for a small woman. As I said before, if the couple were conversing inside a closed room and you cannot see them but only hear their voices, you would mistake one's voice for the other's.

If Mike really wants to have a career in radio and television, he should first go to a voice teacher so the quality of his voice can be improved. Many of the good announcers with the authoritative voices today, although already born with good vocal chords, also spent many long hours practicing with their voices. A good voice, unfortunately, does not go with being the husband of the President.

In the third place, Mike does not look well on TV with his baggy pants and hefty paunch. The President said her Christmas gift to him would be to take him to his tailor so he could make him better-fitting pants. I suggest that she take him to her *kumpadre*, Myther Bunag of the Thursday Club, the tailor who sews better-fitting pants.

But even Myther, I am afraid, would not be of much use if Mike does not reduce. No tailor in the world can do anything for an abdomen that big, unless he is a comedian like Jackie Gleason.

The First Gentleman's public relations advisers—and he has many—should be telling him these (and I am saying these with no offense meant; I just want to help the First Family out of their problems), but I guess they're afraid to tell the truth. Sort of like being afraid to tell the emperor that he has no clothes. In which case they're not serving their client well.

If I were Mike, I would do a Dennis Thatcher, the husband of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who faded away into the woodwork and let his wife get all the publicity. Many Britons don't even know how Mr. Thatcher looked like. His photos rarely appeared in media. If they met him out in the street, they would not even recognize him. I already wrote about this once before and I thought Mike was taking the advice when he cancelled his radio and television shows. But obviously, he really craves the limelight. Maybe he is jealous of his wife who is in the limelight all the time. Why, I don't know—unless he is planning to run for election himself sometime in the future. In which case his efforts are counter-productive. At the rate he's going, he would be as hated as Imelda by the time he runs for public office.

First Ladies, by the way, are different from First Gentlemen. First Ladies are expected to do charity work and do harmless things like cutting ceremonial ribbons. But First Gentleman Mike is generally viewed as trying to be a de facto president, putting his protégés in positions of power and influence, manipulating private deals with the government, and raising funds for the 2004 campaign. I am certain this impression is false, but with the people so suspicious because of past experiences, that impression would be hard to banish.

Imelda Marcos, may I add, was a loved First Lady until she was appointed Metro Manila governor and minister of human settlements and she began acting like a de facto president. That was when the hand began writing on the wall of Malacañang. The Marcos couple and their coterie of cronies, lost in their own worlds of power and luxury, did not see that handwriting on the wall. And so the Marcos era came to a ghastly end.

I hope the First Gentleman will not take his column in a negative way. I only want to help. I know he only wants to help his wife, as all good husbands should. I know he only wants to help her get elected as President on her own in 2004. But the best way to do that is to stay away from the limelight. Don't attract attention to yourself. Disappear. Be invisible. Be like Dennis Thatcher.

In the limelight, he only invites bad vibes. He projects the wrong energy to the public. Some people, sad to say, are like that. They just don't have the right personalities for what they want to be.

I wish the First Family, especially the First Gentleman, happiness from hereon.

Murphy's Law

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IF anything can go wrong, it will. That's Murphy's very famous law, whose wisdom, or curse, showed itself most forcefully last year.

The events there were enough to make you believe in the millenarian cults' favorite idea, or shrill warning, that the end of the world would come at the end of the millennium. It did not last year, but it came pretty close to it.

Certainly, it came pretty close for us, in this country. If anything can go wrong, it will—and did. Of course not everything went wrong for us last year. January in fact began on a very right note. The month before that, Clarissa Ocampo had dropped the bombshell on Joseph Estrada, aka Jose Velarde, and after the hiatus of Christmas, everyone expected fireworks to erupt. They did, in a way nobody could have predicted.

I myself thought the battle would be a long-drawn one, the Senate voting to acquit Erap—he had the numbers, as would soon be evident in the voting on the opening of the second envelope containing corroborating evidence on Jose Velarde—sparking widespread and increasingly strident public protest. Only when the economy had ground to a standstill, and Erap's ability to rule hopelessly compromised, I thought, would he agree to quit. And not after making a deal forestalling prosecution with those who would come after him.

I requested going back to writing five columns per week on that expectation. So many things were happening at the time, three columns per week seemed inadequate to respond to the dazzling turn of events. I remember writing several columns that I discarded later on after more important developments took place: such was the speed with which events were happening.

I went back to five times a week on the second week of January. By the end of the week, Erap was gone.

Such too was the speed with which the crisis resolved itself. It was stunning. Before we knew it, we had another "Edsa" in our hands. Many things made it possible, not least the drama that played out to Filipinos for a couple of months. Or more accurately, the melodrama entitled "I-impeach si Erap," a melodrama that had its share of heroes and villains, the first being the prosecutors and the 10 senators who voted to open the envelope, the second being the de-*campanilla* lawyers and 11 senators who sprung to Erap's defense. The ending was worthy of a true melodrama, Senators Franklin Drilon and Loren Legarda sobbing over the seeming defeat of decency, and Sen. Tessie Oreta leaping to her feet to do a go-go dance of death.

That brought the people to the streets in a dance of life.

That was the last time we would have something to be euphoric about, and it was good that it took on epic proportions. Everything went downhill from there.

Three would be the magic number for Erap. Three months later, after a truly foolish attempt by government to arrest Erap three weeks before the elections, the poor erupted into a travesty, or trick-mirror image, of people power and called it "Edsa III." It was a trick-mirror image in that it refracted truth in a grossly distorted form. What was distorted about it was that the poor would identify with Erap, seeing him not just as one who felt deeply for them but as one of them. It was a resolute denial of the evidence offered by impeachment trial, or indeed by the senses, which showed Erap not just to be a crook but to be a most crooked crook, one who used his loot not to give to the poor but to erect opulent toilets on the presidential yacht.

But it was **not** distorted in that it reflected genuine grievances, in that it drew its inspiration ultimately from their spectacularly abject lot. Politicians since Independence had been warning about the seething social volcano that had arisen from the monumental divide between rich and poor in this country. "Edsa III" was the sound of that volcano exploding.

Then followed in rapid succession: The reemergence of the Abu Sayyaf, much emboldened by their unprecedented success in kidnapping, aided in no small way by Erap's negotiators who kept padding the ransom demands with their cut. This time, they struck in nearby Palawan. Government would strike back with a war in Mindanao, but not without a priest from Basilan revealing the Armed Forces of the Philippines itself continued the time-dishonored practice of padding the Abu Sayyaf's ransom demands with their cut.

Next came the charges and countercharges of corruption, featuring Mike Arroyo, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, and more recently Aniano Desierto. None of the charges stuck, which is part of what made the year suck. Well, Desierto's case isn't over yet.

And next came Sept. 11.

I would know the extent of its effects not by my own newspaper telling me that advertisements suddenly plunged after Sept. 11 but from my friendly neighborhood bistro telling me patronage had plunged after Sept. 11. The impact of Sept. 11 would be fully felt in this country last Christmas, which rivaled 1941 as the bleakest in years: If you're a baby boomer, ask your parents why 1941 was so.

On a not completely minor note, George Harrison died. That was the most tragic thing of all.

I don't know what this year will bring. But I figure that unforeseen and uncontrollable global events notwithstanding, much of what this year will bring depends on what we are willing to do. It is not in our stars but in ourselves that we are underlings, though if I remember right, Cassius used that argument on Brutus to goad him into murdering Caesar. One thing I do know we ought to do if we are to crawl out of the rubble, and that is to give the poor an even break. That is to stop making the poor the first to bear the brunt of crisis and the last to share the fruits of prosperity. That is for the rich to part with some of their loot so they would not part with some of their heads, such as happened in France a couple of centuries ago. The sooner we discover we're all in the same boat, a leak in the third-class section won't drown only the third-class passengers, the sooner we're going to have a better year.

Which is what I wish everyone, one truly happy new year.

Peace and order a must for tourism

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A VERY blessed New Year to all my readers. May the New Year bring you all many blessings from the Lord.

* * *

According to a report in the Malaya yesterday, President Macapagal has made it her administration's biggest challenge in the coming year to correct the international perception that there is a peace and order problem in the country. The report said that the Chief Executive has realized that efforts to attract investors and tourists in this country would be futile if there is no peace and order. No one would be happiest about this priority focus of the Macapagal administration than Tourism Secretary Dick Gordon for he plans to invest a lot of money into promoting the beautiful tourist attractions of this country. But without the underlying peace and order situation such promotion would be throwing good money after bad.

* * *

I ran into Dick Gordon at the Peninsula Hotel earlier this Christmas season, after my husband and I attended the Christmas dinner-concert sponsored by Citibank. He pointed out that he is finalizing plans, together with Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and a couple of other sectoral investors, to invest in a $600,000 promotion plan for the Philippines for one quarter in CNN. It's expensive, but Gordon thinks it's worthwhile. And indeed, judging from the way other Asian countries are investing heavily in CNN promotions, it must be worth their while. But peace and order has to be guaranteed the tourists.

* * *

One has to admire Dick for his never-say-die attitude toward tourism, and his enthusiasm has apparently convinced the government to keep propping it up, though it is admittedly the worst-hit industry, along with travel, since Sept. 11. The Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council has proposed the amendment of RA 7722, to rechannel some 40 percent of travel tax collection to tourism and related programs. In addition, the government has agreed to liberalize visa requirements and fees for tourists from China—a fast-growing tourism market, if loaded with problems at the moment for the Philippines.

The way Gordon sees it, the Philippines has the smallest budget for promotion in the region: $660,000 last year, versus Thailand's $45 million for promotion, Singapore's $70 million, Hong Kong's $66 million and Malaysia's $70 million. But despite the small amount for RP promotion, he points out that the local tourism industry earned some $2.2 billion in tourist receipts for the same period; so it's worth the expense.

Moreover, veteran foreign tour promoters insist that our tourist attractions can equal, if not surpass, those of other countries in the region. But we have to straighten out two things: the peace and order situation, and local tour operations. My brother Roger and his wife Helen spent a few days in Bangkok prior to coming here for the Christmas holidays, and they were simply agog at the way tourism there works like clockwork—so organized, with such varied interests being promoted.

* * *

While we are in this season of grace, let me recount an episode in Cuernavaca, Mexico, an hour and a half's drive from Mexico City, that my husband and I visited late in November, after attending the Christian Democrat International conference. In Cuernavaca's over 400-year-old cathedral, whose architecture reminded me so much of many of our local churches, we were able to view some fading but still beautiful frescoes on the walls depicting a sea voyage of a number of ships on one side, and a crucifixion scene showing many crosses and people hanging on them on the other side. I got pretty excited over the frescoes, for I realized that the scene they depicted could be part of the crucifixions that had been carried out in Japan's so-called "Christian century" in the 16th and early 17th centuries, during which our own Filipino saint, Lorenzo Ruiz, was also martyred for the faith together with a big group of Dominicans.

* * *

In Manila, Mexican Ambassador Enrique Hubbard was so kind as to dig up research material that confirmed that the crucifixion scene in the Cuernavaca cathedral depicted the martyrdom of, among others, Mexico's first saint, a Creole Franciscan friar named Felipe de Jesus. It seems that De Jesus was with 25 members of various religious orders (Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Agustinians) many of whom had been in Japan for some time on evangelizing missions. Actually De Jesus merely ended up in Japan by accident when the galleon he was riding in from Manila drifted to Japanese shores in a storm. He was returning to Mexico after an assignment in the Philippines to receive his ordination as a priest. Detained in Japan, De Jesus, however, chose to share the fate of the other friars, who were first tortured by having their ears cut off; then they were all herded onto carts drawn by oxen, which, according to ancient Japanese custom, was the highest degree of dishonor and humiliation bestowed on an "evildoer." After the torture, the friars were crucified in Nagasaki on Feb. 5, 1567 on orders of the shogun Hideyoshi, who was determined to stamp out the evangelizing efforts of the missionaries. Hideyoshi's forces had occupied the convents of the Franciscan and Jesuit orders in various Japanese cities.

Apparently our San Lorenzo Ruiz and the Dominicans were likewise crucified in Nagasaki later than the group of De Jesus.

* * *

In Mexico we ran into the group of Mayor Eva Marie Singson-Medina of Vigan, who was there to sign a sister-city agreement with Barra de Navidad, a municipality in the Mexican state of Jalisco. The Mexicans have an enduring interest in Vigan, which is acknowledged to be the best-preserved of the Spanish settlements in the Philippines. But publicist Rick Ramos, who's assisting the Spanish government in promoting its projects, wrote to say that perhaps more involved in Vigan is Spain. In fact, says Rick, Vigan is the flagship project of Spain in the preservation and conservation of Philippine historical and cultural heritage.

The Agencia Española de Cooperacion Internacional (AECI), the Spanish development aid agency, started work in Vigan in 1999, beginning with drawing up the city's master development plan at a cost to AECI of close to P40 million. The master plan aims to boost the local economy by improving Vigan's standard of living and protecting its cultural heritage. Another Spanish cultural project is the restoration of a public building and its conversion into the Vigan Cultural & Trade Center at a cost of P16 million, with a floor space of more than 1,000 sq.m. and a seating capacity of more than 300 people. The Padre Burgos Museum will also be rehabilitated early this year. But just as important are the health projects lined up by the Spanish government for Vigan, such as a P60 million water supply project for its barangays, a solid waste management and a P20 million health program to benefit five barangays that right now have inadequate health and sanitary services.

Youth and age

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THERE is a way to reckon a person's age, we're told, that has nothing to do with biology or chronology. A person can be older or younger than his or her biological age, depending on fitness, health risks, potential for debilitating disease or outlook on life.

A 30-year-old can be "really" 50 years old if he's a heavy smoker, leads a sedentary and stress-filled lifestyle, doesn't watch his diet, and has lost a sense of curiosity about life. In effect, he has "wound up" the clock of his life, cutting short his life expectancy by 20 years by indulging in harmful habits and neglecting his health.

A 50-year-old, on the other hand, can by this measure "really" be in her 30's if she's fit, exercises regularly, neither smokes nor drinks, has a positive outlook on life, and finds fulfillment in her work and personal life.

Experts have assigned values to such factors as smoking, drinking alcohol and drug taking, which can lead to health complications; or health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol or depression which cuts down life expectancy. On the other hand, factors such as regular exercise, a satisfying and fulfilling work, home and emotional life, a sense of optimism and hope, even a sense of humor and the ability to take problems in stride may help extend one's life, making one more "youthful" and, literally, "younger than one's years.

* * *

WE all know people who seem to defy the aging process. "Is that someone who's turning 39?" my son asked in both wonderment and admiration at TV footage of Michael Jordan on his way to scoring 50-plus points for the Washington Wizards.

Before her violent demise, Nida Blanca was still astonishing people with her youthful energy. In his recollections of the movie icon, Pete Lacaba, screenwriter, columnist (of the sadly just-defunct "Pinoy Times") and husband to Nida's MTRCB colleague Marra Lanot, writes that the last time he saw Nida, she was burning up the dance floor at a party. I envied Pete for this memory, because the sight of Nida dancing has got to be her most enduring image. Her boogie numbers with perennial partner Nestor de Villa are as much a part of her legacy as her award-winning film portrayals. In the recent MMFF awards nights, Jolina Magdangal, easily three or four decades younger than Nida, paid tribute to her by essaying Nida in a montage of well-loved song-and-dance numbers. But even with the advantage of youth, Jolina couldn't quite match the energy and sheer joie de vivre of Nida, the eternal *galawgaw*.

Then there's Sen. Robert Jaworski, our own Michael Jordan who dominated the game in his prime, and pushed the envelope of physical limitations by playing on the basketball court well into his 40's and 50's. Of course, people say that he should have known when to retire, before he tarnished his fans' memories of him by his diminished playing toward the close of his career. Here's hoping his performance as a senator, which did not exactly take off on a high note, vindicates his place in the nation's affections.

* * *

TWO women have become personal youthful icons not just because they seem to have placed permanent restriction orders on wrinkles, sagging jowls and other hallmarks of age, but also because they never seem to cease thinking up new challenges.

"Tita Eggie" Apostol seems to have become even younger since the days she retired as chair of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and though many attribute this to her ballroom dancing prowess, I believe it's because she's never lost her zest for life and audacity. She founded Pinoy Times in the belief that reading public is ready for intelligent tabloid fare, justifying this faith when her little tabloid led the pack in the coverage of the Erap-era scandals and protests. Pinoy Times may have thrived in the political crisis but was done in by the harsh economic climate. But Tita Eggie is, if nothing else, a survivor and she may yet surprise us with yet another new adventure.

Gilda Cordero-Fernando, on the other hand, is unabashed about her chronological age, having founded a support group for seniors. But with the launch of "Pinoy Pop," her latest book project, she's proven she still has a boundless supply of energy and curiosity about everything Pinoy. Count on Gilda to undertake everything with flamboyance and style, but also to approach the new and unfamiliar with wide-eyed curiosity and fearlessness. Which is, for me, what being young is all about.

* * *

AND then there are people who are "old" in only the best sense of the word. They wear their years without apologies or embarrassment, and carry their age as a well-deserved reward for a life well lived.

Mother Theresa, of course, was an exemplar. Her face was a virtual map of a life lived in hardship and sacrifice, and her small, stooped frame spoke of the burdens she bore as she struggled to "be" among the world's poor and suffering. But gazing upon her lined face, one didn't feel sorrow or pity, but serenity and a sense of sharing transcendence, as her entire life was one lived for a larger, more encompassing ideal.

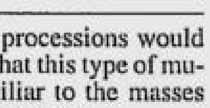
I remember well a BBC documentary on the business of youth in the Unite States and the West, with interviews with men and women who had decided to go for cosmetic surgery and other extraordinary procedures to "preserve" their youthful looks or hold aging in abeyance. It closed with footage of a French provincial family, where the grandmother—bent with age, wrinkled of face, but eyes smiling—was the center of attention and affections.

To grow old without fear or shame. To know when one's time has come. To feel one's chronological age has intersected perfectly with one's destiny and disposition. Perhaps that should be our comforting thought and wish for this, the first day of a new year.

The 'mestizeria'

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



ALTHOUGH 19th century articles and their labels to illustrations tend to distinguish between the Spanish *mestizo* and the Chinese, eventually the term came to mean only offspring from a union of Europeans (specifically Spanish) and Filipinos. The class was a relatively late one having had its origins presumably only in the 16th century with the coming of Legaspi and his men. Today, unlike the *mestizo* Sangley its culture is nearly extinct.

This is not to say that traces cannot be found. On the contrary it has entered into the mainstream to the point that many words for instance that we take as indigenous are of Spanish or Mexican origin. Thus we have *mesa, baso, silla, talipapa, palengke,* etc. But it is no longer 'de rigueur' as it once was to speak Spanish if one expected to be accepted by society. English may have replaced that prerequisite. (American English could signify the size of parental wallets that enabled offspring to acquire the correct intonation and accent. British English is preferable but only if it's of the BBC variety, otherwise it sounds put on.)

The culture influenced cuisine as well. Surely our *nilaga* is derived from *cocido* and *Arroz a la Valenciana* is a form of paella. There's *longaniza, ensaimadas, empanadas, leche flan* and that cholesterol overdose *tocino del cielo*. And anyone observing the rites of Holy Week will easily recognize the very Spanish emphasis on the Crucifixion rather than the Resurrection although I understand the Church has attempted to change the focus since Vatican II. For some reason Filipinos took to the practice of flagellation when it was first introduced in the 17th century and the remnants of that cult can still be seen on the highways of Pampanga during Lent, a somewhat gruesome tourist attraction.

It was actually the *mestizeria* that preserved European culture in the Philippines up to World War II. Articles in that Spanish magazine "Excelsior" note that bands during processions would play operatic arias implying that this type of music would have been as familiar to the masses then as hard rock or reggae is today.

One cultural influence replaced another; the American continent took precedence over the Old World. In order to learn English faster perhaps students in our school were not allowed to speak any other language. If we once said our prayers at home in Spanish we now learned to pray in English and in the end even dream in that language. Household help, holdovers from prewar, still spoke Spanish and now learned English. It was not unusual to find them tri-lingual that was more sometimes than could be said for their *amos*.

The demise of that culture was brought home to me at a birthday celebration of, needless to say, a *tisay* friend in Alabang where a combo sang Latin American songs that were the norm once in bars like Guernica's, El Bodegon, Alberdi's and other nightspots where the *coño* kids congregated. These are songs like "Cielito Lindo," "Reloj," "La Paloma," that are familiar to people of that era. Anyway there we were at the table warbling along with the trio (truth to tell I've always croaked, unfortunately) the very romantic words of "Jurame" when it occurred to me that our children were not familiar with this music. Maybe the Beatles and Sting and Michael Jackson and Madonna's "Material Girl" but certainly not the plaintive romantic desperate words of the ballad that swears never to forget the moment in which they met.

I turned to my companion and commented, "this dies with us." This is unusual in that we aren't speaking here of a generation gap but a culture that just wasn't passed on. Truth to tell it would have been difficult to pass it on in a world of fast foods for instance. Meals then were expected to start with soup, include fish, meat and vegetable dishes and end with dessert and fruits. Mothers of course stayed home and supervised the household. The cost of goods must have been cheap enough to be able to maintain that lifestyle. Certainly there was poverty but I don't think there were people living under bridges and in culverts.

"One generation passeth and another taketh its place." In the Philippine context today this is even more compelling because it prefigures changes that are coming. The *mestizo* is on his way to extinction but if you look at the effects of globalization the Filipino himself and his way of life may be an endangered species. So many of us are spread all over the world in search of better wages and a better life, but who knows how many of us will return?

We see the changes that have taken place in our society this past half-century just in the area of politics for one. You may not have agreed with the Rectos, the Tañadas and the Dioknos but certainly they commanded a respect that is absent from the public perception of a Jalosjos or a Sanchez or even a Fariñas. Whether these men would have passed muster then is doubtful.

You cannot stop progress or what passes for it. I was amused seeing a sign for a "Park n' Ride" in some faceless highway outside Los Angeles recently and wondered if this wasn't where the concept was copied by a city mayor. Replace an open space with concrete—why not? That's what the development of L.A. was always about.

Bridget Jones confessions

YOUNGBLOOD

Joan E. Kamatoy

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.***

THE NEW year is upon us. You can actually smell it in the air—like a capital P, not pleasure but pressure. Auld Lang Syne and explosives have to get on well together now. And while others aspire for world domination in the year now born, and Bridget Jones aims to lose 20 pounds, not get romantically involved with megalomaniacs et al. and probably ride high with a bona fide sex god when the clock strikes 12, here I am seized by a burning desire to get a grip on myself. Why? Just one word, no, make it two: damn resolutions.

Though I do not believe in making resolutions, this time I have to. I embark on conquering my fear of failure. That of losing weight. I am 140 lbs.—heavier than Bridget Jones' 138. And for a five feet flat girl, *that* is bordering on obesity. Naturally, I am well-stacked in my rump and bumpers. No reason to celebrate the new year with anything from the *noche buena* table. Because, you see, when you are fat and short, big boobies are not assets. They just confirm that you are, um, big.

Now let's have a little trip down memory lane. I used to be slim like a featherweight 8210 and sexy like the famed Betty Boop. An 'org' mate named me YXES (sexy written backwards) when I failed to submit my code name for the Kris Kringle. Either I was being complimented or mocked. I'd like to think it was the former. And since college life was forever etched in everybody's memory, that phase was larger than life. After my freshman year, I started losing weight (not by choice, mind), classmates from first year finally started to notice me.

I particularly recall a cute but definitely insensitive guy who quipped that I no longer looked like a piece of furniture. Ouch! That hurt. Not so much because he implied that I used to look *real* bad, but because all those time I was harboring a secret crush on him. He who couldn't even look at me without thinking "by the way, can I borrow your notes on Kay Lawson's in Poli Sci 11?". And I'd been so blind. The *jackass*! Well, after that episode, I was surprised that he courted me. And even surprising myself even more, I dumped him. Years later, we met at the AS steps, and he had this big satisfied look on his face—like "look at me, I'm now teaching in our alma mater." With a professor like that, the future of our nation is doomed!

Soon after college, I started putting on weight; I could not stop. I realized there were so many good things in life i.e., yummy chocolate cookies, carrot cake, which I felt I was deprived of due to a perpetual desire to look good. So now, after gallons of ice cream and hordes of choco-bars, I am trapped inside this body. And I do not resent it. In fact, I have more faith in myself now than when I was skinny. The constant bickering—a battle to eat or not—inside my head stopped. And for once, I am at peace with my inner self.

But like yin & yang, there is good and bad. The bad news is you can't run a few strides without panting like you are seeing your crush for the first time; your heart skipping more than a beat per second. And the erratic heart also ails you when in a middle of a challenging badminton doubles match, you suddenly could not breathe and you try to signal time-out to your friends between gulps of oxygen which eluded your nostrils. And now you realize a new meaning to the adage "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."

And what pisses me off is when inside a jeepney and the barker shouts "*waluhan yan! Usog lang ng konti!*" When in fact the jeep will only fit six and three-fourths of normal size human beings! But if you are on the regular size, it does not need to bother you. Only the fat people feel that the barker is trying to make them feel guilty or pay for two when the desired number of passenger is not reached. Call it a bonus paranoia.

And there's this one time (at bank camp) my friend and I were in a hurry to catch the last train when we landed inside an almost-filled elevator to the MRT station when it loudly banged an overload warning. Our co-passengers who were mostly guys simply stared at us without moving a muscle. The creeps! They were expecting us to go off. Suddenly it was too much for me, and an image of Harry Potter's enemy, Voldemort, loomed inside my head and started turning the muggles into wart-faced croaking frogs. But before I turned criminal, my friend grabbed my wrist and coerced me to jump out of the box as our muggle friends made irate sounds due to the delay. I fought hard not to conjure Voldemort again. But time was essential, we scurried along three flights of cemented stairs, our nostrils flaring. To cut the story short, we missed our train. So did our muggle friends. *Belaaat.*

It is true that the confidence brought about by aesthetic beauty of being slim jumps a few notches down, and in my case, make it a triple. Suddenly, acquaintances with tongues that wag faster than cellphone vibrations, had the urge to talk to me and ask if I got married or got pregnant. A feeble attempt to pry. Instead of denying and explaining it's probably genetic, I just smiled a saccharine smile.

While I do not believe it could get any better, I soon discovered that there is a certain grace only fat people can have. It is in their gait—like the blossoming of velvety rose petals. Then again, there is the good side. Ironic as it may sound, when you are big, you can dash into oblivion in some guy's line of vision. Since I have never been an attention-seeker, that suits me just fine.

There is also a lesser probability that a stranger will try to pick you up while rushing to buy your little nieces and nephews gifts, or enjoying an eat-all-you-can sumptuous meal in a resto. It's a good thing you can do justice to the elaborate meal in front of you. Then, nobody offends you by whistling when you pass by, reminiscent of Legally Blonde's "I object!" And you can give any possible harasser a killer look that will send him away. Unfortunately, my killer look had no effect on this particular attacker along Roxas Boulevard who bumped and greeted me "Merry Christmas miss, hold-up *'to*!" I gasped when he breathed on my face. Because I was repulsed by his halitosis. I wedged bags of grocery give-aways between us and pushed him back hard then I blurted, "*Tugarito ko, GAGO*!" I didn't know what possessed me to say that. But I must admit it sounded good that time. In retrospect, what I meant was he was invading my space by stinky-breathing in it. That got me mad. My attacker was stunned for a moment, I made my escape.

I have been called "cute." But I dispensed with the idea being cute a long time ago. I feel that it's pathetic when people could not say any better than "cute *'yan*!" like giving away careless and insincere "Merry Christmases." It is a very ambiguous term used to please the receiver. The giver on the other hand, could not define what's cute. It's usually said just to please others. Or may be for lack of a better thing to say.

Thus, I arrived at my resolution. I guess the moral of this story is that I don't have to be cute for others. I don't have the overwhelming need to be liked by other people. Moreover, I realize that I don't have to be thin for others, but for myself, if and when I will it to happen. Finally, I sincerely wish you a more spiritually satisfying year ahead of you.

Joan E. Kamatoy, 25, studied in U.P. Diliman. She is now working at the Regional Trial Court of Batangas.

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LETTERS

'Usurious' credit card rates

THE COURAGEOUS and unprecedented move by Sen. Blas Ople to ask the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to regulate the highly "usurious" lending rates of credit card companies, mostly owned by giant foreign and local banks, to make them conform to the official bank lending rate deserves the full support of the entire Filipino citizenry.

The government's apparent ignorance, indifference or apathy to the situation where these credit card companies are reaping huge, usurious and highly immoral profits at the expense of our people cannot be allowed to continue any further. Instead of encouraging our people to spend within their means and save some amount for the proverbial rainy day, these credit card companies, through their questionable promotional offensives, are prodding our people to spend well beyond their means, leading them inevitably to financial disaster. Moreover, their "usurious" and very high interest rates would assure that these credit card loans remain unsettled indefinitely. In our badly depressed economy, these credit card companies are making matters worse.

The Filipino people are thankful that there are still people in government like Senator Ople who have the brains and the guts to go against big businesses to make them toe the line. Most of the government bureaucracy would rather look the other way and play it safe for political reasons.—**ARNULFO P. CRUZ, 102 N. Ramirez St., Galas, Quezon City**

Decisions that do not resolve cases

I DENOUNCE in the strongest terms the dismissal of the plunder and graft complaint against former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada and Mike Velarde and their corespondents by the Ombudsman. The dismissal came just a few days after the House justice committee dismissed the impeachment complaint against Ombudsman Aniano Desierto. The dismissal also came even before the justice committee submitted to the plenary its report on the junking of the impeachment complaint, for the affirmation or rejection of the House after it resumes session in January.

The dismissal of the case against Estrada and Velarde is obviously an act of desperation on the part of Ombudsman Desierto. He is panicking in the face of a swelling public outcry on the dismissal of the impeachment complaint against him, which may just snowball after the holiday season. Thus, Ombudsman Desierto is desperately seeking support and trying to consolidate possible allies in his bid to stop his impeachment.

Somehow, Ombudsman Desierto, in his attempt at consolidation, appears to be succeeding. First, last Wednesday, he managed to have Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo say that Malacañang is satisfied with the decision to junk the impeachment complaint. Worse, Mr. Romulo even remarked that with the dismissal of the impeachment complaint, Ombudsman Desierto is more than qualified to be appointed to the Supreme Court.

Last Thursday, Ombudsman Desierto had his picture taken side by side with Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin. Cardinal Sin was even quoted as saying that "he has faith in the integrity of the Ombudsman" whatever that means! Finally, yesterday, Ombudsman Desierto came out with the announcement of the dismissal of the complaint against Velarde with the latter having a ready press release extolling the dismissal.

Ombudsman Desierto is obviously trying to get the support of Velarde. Or better, the dismissal of the case against Velarde was the reward for his support of Ombudsman Desierto. Thus, it is not surprising if the dismissal of the case against Velarde had something to do with the 35 "insufficient" votes in the House committee on justice. This may also explain why the minority in the justice committee—supposed avid supporters of the deposed president—voted as one to junk the impeachment complaint against Ombudsman Desierto. The minority vote in fact raises very serious questions on why the opposition would rather have Ombudsman Desierto at the helm of the prosecution of Estrada. For, if it is true that Ombudsman Desierto has really been seriously prosecuting or even persecuting Estrada, should not his supporters in Congress be the first to boot Ombudsman Desierto out?

The support of Velarde will also go a long way in ensuring that the House of Representatives will vote to affirm the dismissal of the impeachment complaint when the justice committee report is submitted to the plenary come January.

On the other hand, Ombudsman Desierto's dismissal of the case against Velarde smacks of outright arrogance. Ombudsman Desierto is clearly sending a strong signal to everyone, especially those who have pending cases in his office, that those who are with him are rewarded, while those who are against him are punished by the simple expedience of his dismissing their cases. It also serves as a strong warning to the members of the House who are set to rule on the correctness of the dismissal of the impeachment complaint by the justice committee that it does not pay to vote in accordance with their conscience.

Finally, regardless of the grounds for the dismissal, the Ombudsman would never be able to justify why there is nothing wrong with Velarde's selling real estate to the government for P15,355 per square meter that he either acquired for free or at an average of P2,000 per square meter about one to two years earlier. There, is no justification for the government's acquisition of the said lands for P15,355 per square meter when an independent appraisal company which the government retained for this purpose came out with an appraisal of P6,000 per square meter only and the BIR zonal valuation was just P5,000 per square meter.—**ERNESTO B. FRANCISCO JR., E.B. Francisco Jr. Law Office, Greenbelt Mansion, 106 Perea St., Makati City**

Finish the telecom scam probe

THE PLAN of Sen. Joker Arroyo to clear the name of First Gentleman Miguel Arroyo from his involvement on the alleged "telecom scam" would leave a very bad taste in the mouth.

Such pronouncements could not have come at a more inopportune time for the plagued Macapagal administration, given the fact that the investigation of the Senate blue ribbon committee has only begun to scratch the surface of the controversy.

Since it is only now that the people are beginning to grasp the real issues and personalities involved on the alleged P80-million bribery made by Sen. Edgardo Angara to Pacifico Marcelo for him to implicate President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as charged by a certain Jonathan Ojano, to the fact that Ojano, was later on discovered to be in the staff of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Given all these facts, it would be injudicious for Senator Arroyo to call off the blue ribbon committee investigation on this matter, lest he wants the Macapagal administration to suffer the same fate that befell then President Erap.

The Senate must pursue this issue down to the very end, regardless of who gets hurt. The public must not be made the subject again of any plans to cover things up.

For our senators to realize this, the need to conduct further nonpartisan, honest and credible inquiry on this affair is a must.—**DANTE Q. ISUC, 94-C Manga St., Kamuning Road, Quezon City**

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The year that was, and wasn't

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

BACK in 1965 movie director Stanley Kubrick and sci-fi writer Arthur Clarke collaborated to produce the film "2001: A Space Odyssey." Clarke eventually wrote a novel with the same title with bold predictions of interplanetary travel and thinking computers.

There were other visions for this first year of the new millennium. With the Cold War long over, it seemed humanity was now ready for an era of peace. The United Nations declared 2001 the year for a dialogue among civilizations.

As the year unfolded, we found the most spectacular technological advances were not to be found out in outer space but here on earth. Prospects for human cloning and stem cell research sounded more like Aldous Huxley's brave new world rather than Clarke's space odysseys.

But news about these reproductive technologies remained incomprehensible and distant for many people. For most people, the icons of 21st century modernity came with information technologies, with computers and cellphones.

And cable television. It was this technology that so affected Filipinos at the start of the year: people in offices and homes watching, live, the impeachment hearings and taking to the streets and deposing President Estrada. A few weeks later, during the Labor Day weekend, we watched as Erap loyalists poured into the streets in massive demonstrations that ended violently.

Later in the year, it wasn't just a nation but the entire world, watching the horrors of the jet planes crashing into the World Trade Center, replayed many times over. It was cable as well that allowed the world to watch as America and its allies retaliated in Afghanistan. It was cable, as well, that made us wonder if perhaps the American political scientist Samuel Huntington was right in his book, published in 1993, predicting a murderous clash, rather than a dialogue, of civilizations.

The year showed us the different potentials of the new information technologies. Cellphone texting was used to mobilize Filipinos for "People Power II" but it has also degenerated into a medium for exchanging inane jokes and vicious rumors. Likewise, cable television often ended up shedding more heat than light, there to incite and agitate.

Compare the "War Against Terror" rhetoric with the attempts to help people understand Islam and explain the historical origins of Muslim-Christian animosity. It's not surprising that even as our President declared the end of Ramadan as a national holiday, Mercury drugstores were giving away 2002 calendars with the picture of a mosque and a caption: "Islam Church where they worship Mohammed."

To Mercury's credit, they have since withdrawn the calendar and issued a public apology, explaining that the caption should have read: "A Muslim mosque (house of prayer) where they worship ALLAH." The incident, however, reminds us that with the new information technologies, the world has indeed become a new global village, but often retaining old prejudices.

The new information technologies may in fact reinforce parochial thinking, a new form of tunnel vision. We can watch events unfold in New York and Kabul but they are for the most part, sanitized images. Never do we see blood, and only occasionally do you see the casualties, usually of the "bad guys" such as Taliban corpses.

The images are muted as well. We see but do not hear toddlers wandering around in refugee camps, or people wailing for their dead. The world, at the distant end of the tunnel, is interpreted for us by Fox TV's commentators, occasionally cut short by live transmissions of Blair or Bush with some speech.

Notice though that as mass media coverage comes closer to home, the sounds return full force. We switch to local stations with a never-ending stream of newscasts and talk shows, occasionally profound but more often senseless babble. The blood and gore return with full sound bites.

On our end of the tunnel, we have droves of preachers and politicians and public relations managers jostling for air time. The year 2001 showed how politics and governance have become pitifully reduced to performance. We've seen the grandstanding in the Senate, exposé after exposé leading to nothing. We saw the Nida Blanca murder investigations degenerate into tragic farce.

Cable and its live transmissions have a long way to go with its promises of promoting transparency and accountability and of building a civil society. At best, they remain substitutes for soap operas and telenovelas. Watch out in 2002 as people return to apparitions of the Virgin Mary, or new sightings of UFOs.

I suspect that if the year 2001 offered us any grounds for hope, it was in the many little heroic acts in these times of despair: the firemen who rushed into the blazing infernos in New York, the Afghan women who continued to hold classes for girls, defying the Taliban's ban, or here at home, the courageous testimony during the impeachment hearings.

I'm still optimistic about 2002 and the years ahead. There's room yet for grand dreams if we can just remind ourselves not to look too far out into space for what can be.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

No constitutional hindrance for GMA

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's political party and supporters should concentrate more on building up the image of the President than uselessly pondering on whether or not former President Fidel V. Ramos would run for president in the 2004 elections.

Our Constitution provides that the president "elected by direct vote of the people (who has) served for a term of six years shall not be eligible for any reelection." (Section 4, Article VII, Constitution) Since President Ramos was elected by a direct vote of the people in the May 1992 election and served for a term of six (6) years, the said prohibition that the president "shall not be eligible for any reelection" shall apply to him.

The question now is whether or not President Macapagal could still run for president in 2004 considering the said constitutional prohibition that "the president shall not be eligible for any reelection." The answer is yes, President Macapagal is still eligible to run for president in 2004 because she merely succeeded to the presidency and will not serve as such "for more than four (4) years." The same section of the Constitution provides that "no person who has succeeded as president and has served as such for more than four years shall be qualified for election to the same office at any time." President Macapagal assumed the presidency in January 2001 and will serve until June 30, 2004 or for three and a half years only.

Hence, unlike President Ramos, President Macapagal is not disqualified under our Constitution to run for president in 2004 because she has not served the office "for more than four (4) years" and she has not been elected to the presidency by a direct vote of the people for a term of six (6) years.

And, in fairness to President Macapagal, she is doing good as President and she has still the luxury of time to improve her performance rating to insure a successful campaign for the 2004 presidential election.—**ROMULO B. MACALINTAL, lawyer, 13 Cagayan Valley St., Philamlife Village, Pamplona, Las Piñas City**

Give them a break

MASS media has been bashing Sandiganbayan Justices Francis Garchitorena and Jun Badoy mercilessly. They may have their faults. But as human beings they are still a credit to the nation.

I first heard of Francis as the young lawyer-aide of Pepe Diokno, brash, garrulous and articulate in the defense of the people's rights against the dictatorial rule of Marcos.

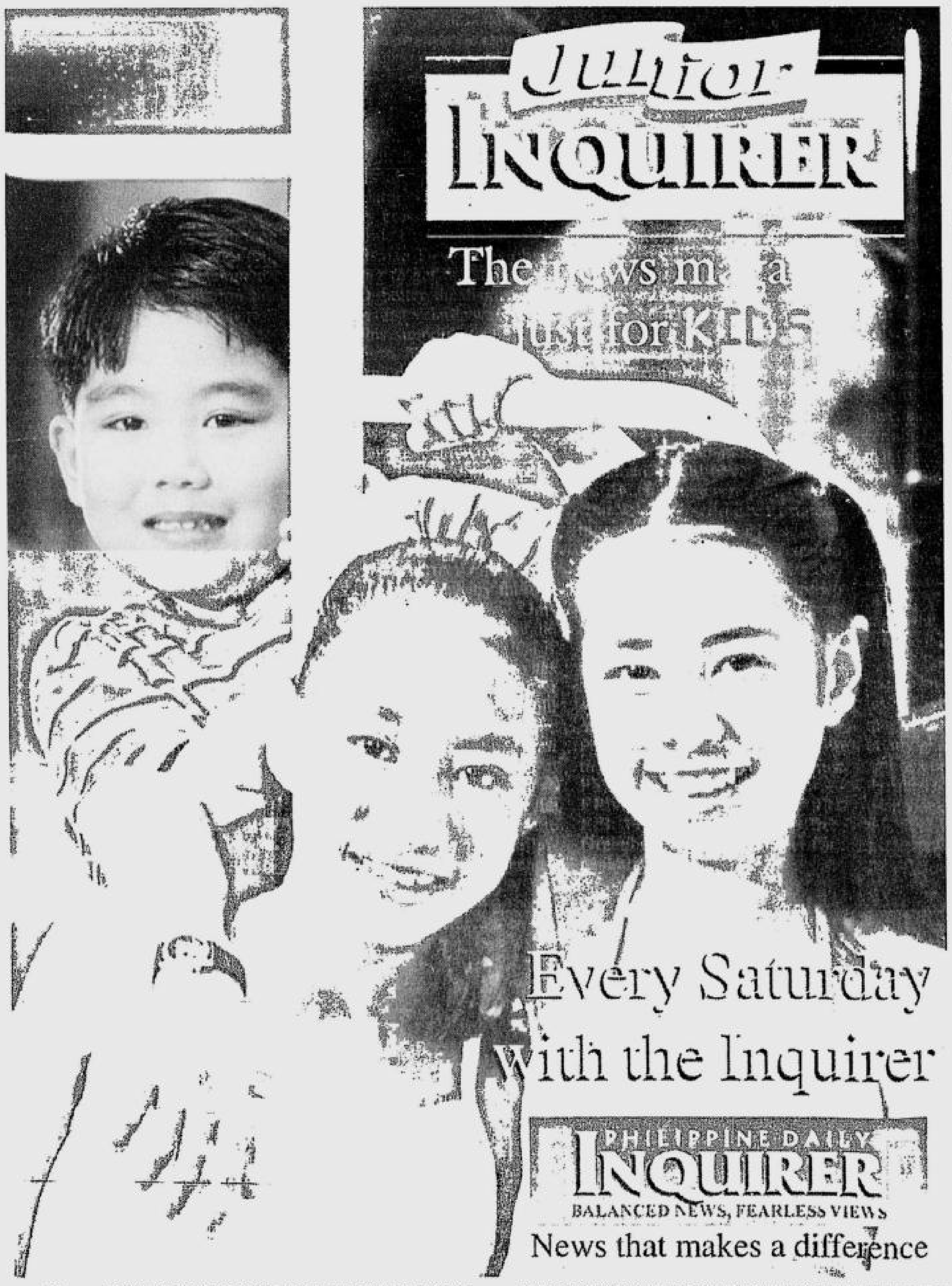
I first met Jun as a delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention, sober, scholarly and succinct in his defiance of Marcos' manipulation of the Convention delegates.

They were both good men, then. They had the gift of gab-sarcastic in the case of Francis; lawyerly in the case of Jun.

And they both had integrity.

Despite their perceived missteps in the performance of their duties, then, I do not see that they are evil men.

Please give them a break.—**AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL JR., senator, Senate, 6/F Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City**



No plots, Ping assures AFP

(From page A1)

since it was properly documented and duly issued to Petty Officer 1 Sotto," the senator said.

Lacson said he had received information that Miraflor was arrested for possession of explosives and for attending a supposed meeting among former officers of the PAOCTF at the Aberdeen Court restaurant in Makati City on Dec. 19, 2001.

The senator said that he called for the Christmas party of the former personnel of the PAOCTF but was not able to host it because of the bicameral meetings for the 2002 budget.

"If there's anyone to be blamed and investigated for the confusion based on the principle of command responsibility, it has to be PO1 Sotto's present Commanding Officer, Commander Rosauro Sarmiento (PN).

"Besides, why question the authority of Lt. Miraflor, an erstwhile commanding officer of the Explosives Section of the Navy's Special Warfare Group, to possess or have in his custody duly issued explosives. It's like challenging the control exercised by the chief of the PNP Firearms and Explosives Division over firearms kept in the FED vault in Camp Crame," Lacson said in the letter.

Court martial

But military intelligence chief Col. Victor Corpus yesterday said that Miraflor could face a military court martial for illegal possession of a huge cache of explosives.

"Our ongoing investigation is in preparation for a court martial," said Corpus, chief of Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

Corpus was referring to Miraflor and eight of his men.

The SRU was previously attached to the now defunct PAOCTF which was headed by Lacson when was still director general of the Philippine National Police.

Miraflor was arrested on Dec. 28 after military intelligence agents recovered 100 blocks of C-4 explosives, which his unit drew from the armory of the Sangley Naval Base in Cavite in September 2000.

"It depends on how the tribunal will decide the case," Corpus said when asked about the penalties awaiting Miraflor and his men.

Miraflor is in the custody of the Philippine Marines in Fort Bonifacio, Makati.

"We cannot yet say when our investigation will be concluded but it is ongoing," Corpus said.

Senate probe

Sen. Gregorio Honasan raised the possibility that arrest of Miraflor and his men was irregular.

Honasan, a member of Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1971, said he would file a resolution asking the Senate national defense and security committee to look into the arrest.

"It is already disturbing that these officers are now caught in a game our national leaders play," the senator said.

"These men, who profess loyalty only to God and country, are now being used as unwitting pawns in the political game they should not take part into," he said.

But National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said Miraflor and his men were being treated according to military laws.

No violation

"There are no violations of their rights. What are being applied here are military laws. That's why they were placed on technical arrest," Golez said.

Honasan asked Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, AFP chief of staff, and Corpus to present evidence that Miraflor was involved in destabilization plots.

"Unless Villanueva and Corpus present evidence against Miraflor, they should back off and conduct themselves as real gentlemen and officers by not allowing themselves to be used for any political agenda or vendetta," Honasan said.

Aside from Villanueva and Corpus, Honasan said he would ask Rosauro Sarmiento, Lt. Col. Ted Ano and a certain Major Zaragosa to explain the circumstances surrounding the arrest and detention of Miraflor and his men.

Asked about the basis for the continued detention of Miraflor, Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, AFP spokesperson, said, "he's covered by military regulations."

Under the Articles of War, a commanding officer can order the detention or the confinement of his subordinates, who are being investigated, according to Adan.

"From what I know, Miraflor is the principal. His men are being asked . . . if he (Miraflor) knowingly gave instructions for the explosives not to be turned over," the AFP spokesperson said in Taglish.

Discontent

The arrest of Miraflor has sparked reports of discontent in the military. Miraflor's classmates from PMA classes of 1990 and 1991 reportedly came out with a joint statement denouncing the arrest.

But PMA class of 1991 denied that it had come out with a joint statement.

Adan dismissed the report, saying that it could just be the sentiments of a few PMAers.

"On the part of the AFP, we're saying that that they should just wait for the results of the investigation. It's a serious offense that must not be ignored," Adan said.

"Miraflor will be treated as an officer and a gentleman. There is no cause for worry . . . This is not a hodgepodge investigation . . . As PMAers, we're supposed to search for the truth. Our advice is for them to wait and be assured that (it will be fair)," he said.

In Malacañang, Press Undersecretary Manuel Sanchez said the Macapagal administration was not harassing former subordinates of Lacson.

Sanchez said possession of a huge amount of explosives was "really questionable because the explosives could flatten all major military service headquarters in Metro Manila as well as five buildings in Makati.

"It is not in the ordinary course of business that such small group of soldiers will have this much explosives," Sanchez said over RMN radio.

This refers to our telephone conversation yesterday regarding the technical arrest of Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor (PN) in Sangley Point, Cavite, on Dec. 28, 2001.

However, I would like to set the record straight on the supposed meeting which was actually an informal dinner and Christmas party I hosted for the former officers and personnel of the PAOCTF.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the gathering due to my much-needed attendance at the bicameral meetings for the FY 2002 budget.

Lest I and my former men be accused of plotting anew, I wish to inform you that I hosted another dinner for former PAOCTF officers on Dec. 28, 2001 to make up for my absence in the Dec. 19 Christmas party. *With reports from Carlito Pablo, Cynthia D. Balana and Martin P. Marfil*

Ex-military rebels disown 'spokesman'

BY CARLITO PABLO

BARON CERVANTES: Last straw (FILE PHOTO)

FORMER military rebels yesterday formally disowned self-styled Army Capt. Baron Cervantes who has been identifying himself as spokesperson and co-founder of the Young Officers Union for the last several years.

Speaking for the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa and YOU, Col. Romeo Lim said the move was taken after Cervantes supposedly circulated word that RAM and YOU leaders secretly met in a Cavite resort on Dec. 15 to plot a coup against the Macapagal administration.

"That was the last straw. RAM and YOU are fully supportive of the government and Cervantes should be exposed for what he is," Lim said.

Lim said the only gathering attended by RAM and YOU personalities last month was the Dec. 21 Christmas party of RAM in its headquarters in Makati.

Lim released official military records indicating that Cervantes does not hold a captain's rank and has been dropped from the rolls twice in 1994 and 1998.

The same records showed that Cervantes was never part of the coup attempts launched by the RAM and YOU against the Aquino administration.

"His connections in the media had presented himself as the YOU spokesperson. But records show that he was never on the list of military personnel tried in a military court for the coup attempts during the late '80s," the records said.

The papers likewise showed that Cervantes has yet to return a caliber 45 pistol, two magazines and 63 rounds of ammunition issued to him.

Records also indicated that Cervantes might be the same fictitious Capt. Bonifacio Magtanggol who has been issuing unauthorized YOU statements threatening the Macapagal administration.

"The mere fact that he is calling himself a captain who has never been promoted is an indication that the subject tends to distort reality to his own imaginings," records said.

Cervantes, 36, was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant in 1988 but was later "tried for desertion" in 1993 and "eventually dropped from the rolls sometime in 1994."

He was reinstated into active service in the Army in August 1998 but went on absence without leave (Awol) and was "dropped from the rolls, again, effective Sept. 3, 1998."

"His so-called Strategic Intelligence and Management Group under YOU does not exist as a component in the YOU's structure of the organization," records said.

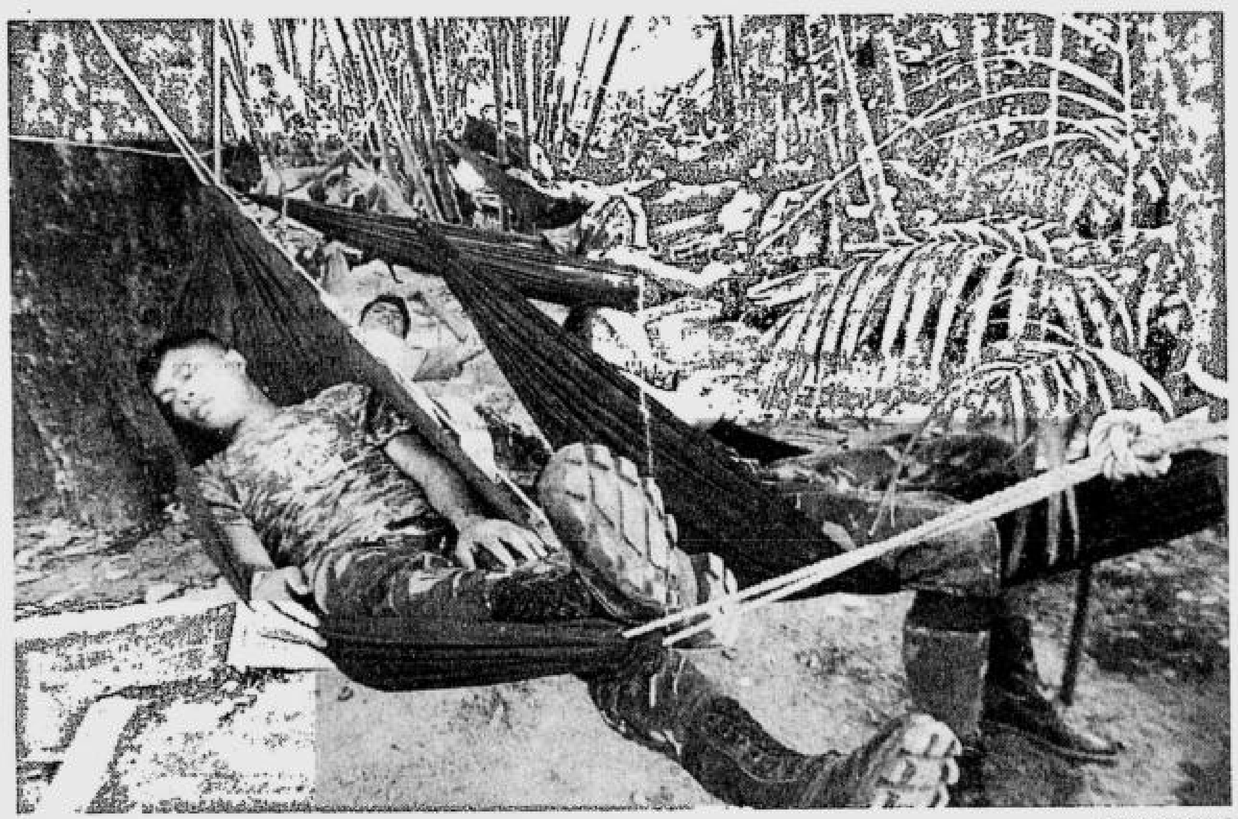
Lim said RAM and YOU have long tolerated Cervantes' posturing as YOU spokesperson "because nobody really believes him."

"But it's a different case that Cervantes is now accusing RAM and YOU of plotting against the Macapagal government," Lim said.

The real founders of YOU were Scout Ranger Lt. Colonels Abraham Purruganan and Danny Lim, Lt. Col. Allen Capuyan, Police Chief Insp. Diosdado Valeroso and Marine Lt. Col. Ariel Querubin.

2001, a difficult year for the PNP

BY TJ BURGONIO



JOAN BONDOC

SLEEPING off the weariness of war and the loneliness for the long-distant sights and smells of home.

FROM a bloodless people's revolt to the armed rebellion in Mindanao, the entire police force had their hands full throughout 2001.

Compared with the previous years, 2001 was a much more difficult year for keeping law and order, according to top officials of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

First, policemen had to rein in the huge crowd that massed at Edsa for five days during the "Edsa II" people power that eventually led to the ouster of President Joseph Estrada.

The PNP later served an arrest warrant on the disgraced President and secured him throughout his trial for plunder.

The arrest led supporters of Estrada to stage their own Edsa rally. On May 1, they stormed the gates of Malacañang in an attempt to grab power.

Pitched battles between the Estrada supporters and policemen and soldiers erupted.

As if this was not enough, the PNP had to contend with the Abu Sayyaf's abduction of 20 persons, including three Americans, from a resort in Palawan that same month.

Then in late November, police had to confront supporters of Moro rebels led by Nur Misuari, who attacked military outposts in Jolo. The attack was intended to stop the holding of the elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

On top of these, the police were tasked with the investigation of the murder of movie actress Nida Blanca, also in November.

"We were confronted by series after series of crises. It was turbulent," said Director Thompson Lantion, head of the PNP Directorate for Police Community Relations (PCR).

He pointed out that the "peace and order problems" encountered during the four previous administrations all happened this year. "Name it, it's all there," Lantion said.

But of all the crises, the May 1 siege of Malacañang proved as the most daunting to the PNP, whose chief, Director General Leandro Mendoza, was installed only nine days after President Macapagal-Arroyo took her oath of office on Jan. 20.

"That was difficult. The mob was already at the gates of the seat of power. If an armed component had intervened, we would have had a different history," Lantion said.

Protesting the shabby treatment of Estrada, his loyalists stormed the Palace but they were driven back by teams of the Presidential Security Group, soldiers and policemen.

Thankfully, Lantion said the PNP survived most of the crises.

"We confronted these challenges and we're able to overcome them despite our meager resources," he said, referring to the lack of budget for the purchase of firearms, communications equipment and vehicles.

But the national police failed to stop the rash of kidnappings perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf bandits in Mindanao and kidnap syndicates in the metropolis. Kidnapping cases surged to 99 this year from last year's 48.

At least 18 of the kidnap victims were foreigners. Three of the 20 persons abducted from the Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan, including American missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham, are still being held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf in the jungles of Basilan. The other American, Miguel Sobero, was beheaded on June 12.

This early, Lantion admitted that the PNP was facing another daunting task next month: securing Misuari once he is extradited to Manila. "That's one of our major problems early next year," he said.

Misuari is set to be deported on Jan. 15 from Malaysia, where he was arrested for illegal entry on Nov. 24, shortly after his supporters staged the armed rebellion.

Gov't reassures 'Sona' boys: We'll help you

(From page A1)

Nation Address last July.

In a letter to the INQUIRER, Soliman said the government had extended P16,000 in educational assistance for each of the children and P10,000 in seed capital for each of their families' livelihood.

The President, she said, has also allocated P5 million from her social fund for the schooling of about 400 children affected by the garbage landslide that killed scores of Payatas residents in July 2000.

The Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council is studying the children's families' request for Payatas residents to own the pieces of land they have been occupying for over a decade now.

Housing, education, and livelihood were the key concerns contained in the paper boats launched down Pasig River to Malacañang by Edwin Dolera, 9, Jomer Pabalan, 10, and Jayson Vann Banogan, 11, and other Payatas children.

Soliman said the government has also been extending support to Felipe "Mang Pandoy" Nataño, the forgotten representative of the Filipino Everyman during the Ramos administration.

Miriam's fearless forecast: GMA vs Erap in 2004

(From page A1)

"This will test the limits of our democracy," she said, adding this will be a choice between the symbols of "rich people power" and "poor people power."

Santiago said she continues to get in touch with Estrada and talks with him "occasionally."

But she said 2004 has not cropped up in their talk.

Asked if she would advise Estrada to run in 2004, she said: "He has no choice. He will have to run if he is interested in vindicating himself."

Santiago said that she observed that Estrada continues to make "defiant statements."

"And since his statements are defiant that means he's still alive," she said.

Santiago said all other presidential timber—including opposition aspirants Edgardo Angara and Panfilo Lacson, and Raul Roco, Sergio Osmeña III, or Loren Legarda from the administration—are "political homunculi." (manikins or very small human creatures).

"They have no force of their own. They are waiting for a. king-maker or for events to develop," she said.

No charisma

She said, Lacson who is now a senator, "has no independent presidential dimension of his own."

She said people think of Lacson only as a presidential timber if he would be supported by the Estrada camp.

"He does not have charisma, he is only part of a machine," she said.

Angara, she said, is "compelled to be a surrogate of Estrada because he does not have grassroots appeal of his own."

Santiago herself ran for president twice, the first time losing to Ramos in a bitterly fought contest in 1992. She made another run in 1998 but fared poorly this time. She sought reelection to the Senate in last year's May elections and lost.

Santiago, a close ally of Estrada, said the deposed President is eligible to run in 2004 because he did not voluntarily renounce his office when he left Malacañang during the second Edsa people power revolt in January.

She said Estrada was also unable to finish his term, or go beyond the four-year provision spelled out in the Constitution.

The only obstacle to an Estrada run, she said, is if he is convicted of plunder by the Sandiganbayan ahead of the 2004 elections and his penalty includes loss of his right to suffrage.

"The likelihood is they will not be able to finish it because the records of the Sandiganbayan show they are unable to finish cases within five years," Santiago said.

She cited her own anti-graft case, which stemmed from her implementation of the alien legalization program without an act of Congress when she was immigration commissioner, which took eight years to finish.

Sandigan trial

"But they have the power to set marathon hearings by setting aside all their other cases and devote their entire time to Estrada's case," she said.

But she said the political cost would be too high.

"This will be seen as railroading the case and Estrada is surely to raise the matter to the Supreme Court," she said.

Santiago said even the international community, including the United States, might be compelled to intervene on grounds of violations of human rights.

Santiago said the Estrada plunder case can only be finished ahead of 2004 by sheer "hob-nailed boots" or use of force.

Santiago, an expert on constitutional law, earlier said Ramos could not run in 2004 because the Constitution expressly prohibits "all kinds of presidents" from running for and serving a second term. She said the constitutional ban on reelection of any president was "irrefragably clear."

But she made an exception in the case of Estrada, who is standing trial for plunder and other criminal charges after he was driven out of Malacañang in Jan. 20, 2001.

Santiago advanced two reasons why Estrada is eligible for reelection: first, he has not served office for more than four years and second, he did not voluntarily resign.

The Constitution says any president shall not be eligible for reelection. It also says that someone who succeeded and served the post for more than four years shall not be eligible for the same office.

Four-year rule

Santiago said this four-year provision applies to Ms Macapagal because she was not elected to the presidency but merely succeeded it by virtue of her being the vice president. She, however, can still run in 2004 because by then she would have served just three years-and-a-half in office.

But Santiago argued this four-year rule does not apply to Estrada because he was elected, not succeeded as President.

"So Estrada can run for reelection because he has not served for more than four years," she said.

Santiago said Estrada also did not voluntarily resign the presidency.

She said the Constitution provides that "voluntary renunciation" of the office shall not be considered as an interruption in the continuity of service for the full term that a president is elected.

This means, she said, that when a president voluntarily resigns on his first day as president, the Constitution deems him to have served the full six-year term and disqualifies him from seeking another term.

Erap's case

"But remember, he (Estrada) never resigned. The Supreme Court simply interpreted it as effective, or constructive, resignation," she said.

Santiago said that on his last day in Malacañang, Estrada did not resign.

What he did, she said, was another provision in the Constitution wherein he wrote a letter to the Senate President and the Speaker stating that he was "temporarily unable to discharge the powers and duties" of the presidency.

"So this is not the voluntary renunciation contemplated by the Constitution because temporary inability to discharge allows him to resume his office," she said.

"If he voluntarily resigned, he will not be eligible to run in 2004," she said.

She said the fact that the Supreme Court used "effective" or "constructive" to describe Estrada's "resignation" means that it was not deemed voluntary.

She said effective resignation is not voluntary resignation.

"The only conclusion you can have is that Estrada's six years have not lapsed and therefore he is qualified to run again," Santiago said.

The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

New Argentina president quits

SAA announcing his resignation during a nationally televised speech from his hometown Dec. 30. REUTERS

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—Argentina's deeply divided politicians, reeling from the second resignation of a president in barely a week, clashed on Monday over who would next lead a country plagued by riots and recession.

After violent street protests and a battle within the ruling Peronist Party led Adolfo Rodriguez Saa to suddenly quit as interim president on Sunday, depressed Argentina found itself adrift with no consensus over how to end the chaos.

Eduardo Camano, head of the lower house of Congress, found himself with the hot potato of Argentina's provisional presidency after the Senate chief also resigned. But Camano can only head the country for 48 hours before Congress must name a new interim president, according to the Constitution.

One powerful Peronist governor called for an emergency "government of national salvation," while another urged elections for a new president "as soon as possible."

But the non-stop political tumult raised questions about whether Argentina is governable at all as the crumbling middle class grows increasingly restless in its protests of widespread corruption and a deep recession now in its fourth year.

Rodriguez Saa, appointed just a week ago by Congress to lead until elections set for March 3, quit after stomping on the toes of Peronist Party barons who accused him of trying to delay or cancel the vote to cling to power longer.

His fate was also sealed by thousands of demonstrators who took to the streets on Friday night to protest strict curbs on bank deposits and his appointment of a cabinet many believed was rife with corruption.

The protests turned violent, leaving a dozen police injured after clashes in front of the presidential palace. Looters also broke down the doors of Congress, set small fires and pushed couches and statues down its front steps.

"I'm not going to be the president who continues the old Argentina," Rodriguez Saa said in a televised address to the nation on Sunday. "This selfish, petty attitude leaves me no alternative but to present my resignation."

Carousel of presidents

Television images showed a very small group of protesters gathering outside the presidential palace early on Monday, but they appeared to be easily outnumbered by police in riot gear and expectant news photographers.

In his short term in office, Rodriguez Saa stopped payments on Argentina's foreign debt, setting up what would be the biggest sovereign default ever and consolidating Latin America's third-largest economy as a pariah in world markets.

Rodriguez Saa was Argentina's third president this year.

Violent protests that killed 27 people forced Fernando de la Rua to resign as president on Dec. 20 only half way through his four-year term.

"What people want more than anything is a government," said presidential hopeful Carlos Ruckauf, governor of Buenos Aires province, the country's richest and most populous. "Argentina immediately needs a government of national salvation."

Peronist powerbrokers said Rodriguez Saa's plans for a new currency and promises to create a million jobs sounded too ambitious for a man only slated to stay in power for three months. *Reuters*

Bin Laden likely alive, says US spy overseer

WASHINGTON—The head of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence said on Sunday that fresh intelligence showed "high probabilities" that Osama bin Laden was still alive despite the nearly three-month US military drive to destroy him and his al-Qaida network in Afghanistan.

"The latest intelligence we've had indicates that the high probabilities are that bin laden is still alive," chair Bob Graham, a Florida Democrat, said on CNN's "Late Edition."

"Where he is, is a question mark. The trail has gone cold as to whether he's still in the caves of Tora Bora or, in fact, has slipped into Pakistan" across the rugged 2,400-km border, Graham said, declining to discuss details of the intelligence.

The Tora Bora mountain complex, 50 km south of Jalalabad, was captured by US-backed forces opposing Afghanistan's Taliban militia on Dec. 6 after some of the heaviest bombing of the campaign, which began on Oct. 7.

On Friday, President George W. Bush said he had no idea where Bin Laden was—or whether he had survived "in a cave with the door shut or a cave with the door open."

Appearing tired, gaunt and gesturing with his right hand only, though reportedly left-handed, Bin Laden was last heard from publicly in a videotape that surfaced on Wednesday and was apparently taped earlier this month.

The Pentagon said on Sunday that the US Marine vanguard force in southern Afghanistan was being relieved by an Army air assault unit to free the Marines for unspecified new missions.

Elements of the Army's 101st Airborne Division, headquartered at Fort Campbell in Kentucky, have been ordered to deploy to Afghanistan as part of the campaign to crush surviving al-Qaida guerrillas and their Taliban allies, the Pentagon said.

"These forces will relieve the Marine Corps forces in the Kandahar area to allow the Marines the opportunity to prepare for future missions," said Marine Lt. Col. Michael Humm, a Pentagon spokesperson.

The Pentagon did not say when the changeover would be completed. More than 1,000 Marines—drawn from the 15th and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units—have been deployed in southern Afghanistan since their advance elements set up a bridgehead called Camp Rhino within striking distance of Kandahar airport on Nov. 25.

The Marines rolled into Kandahar, the former Taliban stronghold, on Dec. 13, securing the airport and establishing a makeshift prison where 139 battlefield "detainees" were being held as of Sunday.

Graham said he had received no intelligence on the physical condition of Bin Laden, the Saudi-born militant accused of masterminding the Sept. 11 attacks that killed more than 3,000 people in the United States. *Reuters*

AN AFGHAN woman, her face showing after lifting her burqa, rides a passenger bus in Kabul, Dec. 30. The chairperson of Afghanistan Women's movement on Sunday called on women to set aside their burqas, which were compulsory for five years under the fundamentalist Taliban. REUTERS

Pakistan calls for peace, detains top militant blamed for India attack

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan said Sunday it wanted to defuse the brewing crisis with India and announced it had arrested the head of a militant group blamed for staging an attack on India's parliament.

Police arrested Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, the head of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, "for making inflammatory speeches to incite people to violate law and order," a top security official, requesting anonymity, told AFP.

India has blamed Lashkar and another Pakistan-based militant outfit—Jaish-e-Mohammad—of carrying out the Dec. 13 attack on the parliament complex in New Delhi at the behest of Pakistani military intelligence.

Military tensions have soared since the raid, with both sides massing troops along their border and trading tit-for-tat diplomatic sanctions.

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf said Sunday the nuclear rivals should "move towards peace and harmony" rather than war but would respond vigorously to any attack.

"Let me use this forum to convey a message to the people of India: Pakistan stands for peace, Pakistan wants peace, Pakistan wants to reduce tension," he told reporters after holding a meeting of political parties.

"However, Pakistan has taken all counter measures. If any war is thrust on Pakistan, the Pakistan armed forces and the 140 million people of Pakistan are fully prepared to face all consequences with all their might.

"Any sane person would not opt for such a course as going to war. I hope it does not lead to that," he said. "We are hoping for the best, but we are prepared for the worst."

SAEED

Analysts believe Saeed's arrest is a significant gesture of Pakistan's desire to defuse the dangerously high levels of brinkmanship between the two neighbors.

Lashkar is one of the most powerful militant groups seeking to expel Indian troops from the northern third of the disputed Himalayan state of Kashmir, which is divided between India and Pakistan.

The group has been blamed for other high-profile attacks, including an assault on New Delhi's historic Red Fort in December last year.

Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar earlier said tensions were rising by the hour as Pakistan learnt of the deployment of the bulk of India's forces from their peacetime position to locations close to the border.

Islamabad has denied any role in the Dec. 13 attack but has arrested some 60 militants, including the founding head of the Jaish group, Maulana Masood Azhar, and has frozen the assets of Lashkar.

India, however, has dismissed the moves as "cosmetic".

US President George W. Bush on Saturday called on Pakistan to do more to "eliminate extremists" implicated in the attack, and urged Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to defuse their dispute.

Musharraf said he welcomed intervention by Washington and other members of the international community in trying to "play a useful and positive role in defusing the tension".

Vajpayee said he was confident that diplomatic pressure would resolve the standoff by forcing Pakistan to act decisively against the militants. *AFP*

6 armed Palestinians on attack bid killed

JERUSALEM—Six Palestinian militants on apparent attack missions were killed by Israeli troops in the northern Gaza Strip late Sunday, shattering a recent calm which has created expectations for the return of the US peace envoy.

Israeli security troops killed three armed Palestinian militants who were trying to enter Israel near the village of Beit Hanun and who, according to army radio, had bombs strapped to their bodies.

"Three armed Palestinians crossed the fence into Israel from the northern Gaza Strip. Security forces saw the Palestinians, called them to stop and tried to arrest them. In response one of them opened fire," according to a statement issued by the office Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Just hours earlier, Israeli troops killed three other armed Palestinian militants as they were apparently trying to break into the nearby Jewish settlements of Alei Sinai and Nitzanit, military sources said.

The militants were allegedly trying to smuggle a bag of explosives into the settlements, but were spotted by a patrolling armored vehicle and killed by a tank shell, they said.

Before the deadly violence, Israeli government officials had said moves were underway to secure the return of US peace envoy Anthony Zinni to the region in a bid to hammer out a ceasefire after 15 months of fighting which has claimed more than 1,100 lives.

Zinni, a retired Marine Corps general, left the Middle East two weeks ago amid raging violence that torpedoed his peace mission.

"There are contacts with the Americans with a view to a return by Mr. Zinni," said government spokesperson Avi Pazner, who said the US envoy would be "welcome" in Israel.

Palestinian leaders had also been trying to persuade Washington to take advantage of a rare lull in the fighting, up until Sunday night, and renew its mediation efforts in the Middle East. *AFP*

At least 264 killed in blaze sparked by fireworks in Lima

FIREFIGHTERS work to extinguish the blaze of a big fire in the historic center of Lima on Dec. 29. REUTERS

LIMA, Peru—The death toll from an inferno in central Lima sparked by fireworks being sold ahead of New Year's Eve rose to 264 people on Sunday and could easily reach 300, a city official said.

The blaze in a busy shopping district erupted on Saturday night but rescue workers were still finding corpses on Sunday afternoon, some of victims who had been asphyxiated by smoke in areas not touched by the flames themselves.

As dawn broke on Sunday blackened bodies littered the streets in the historic city center, some burned to the bone, others with their arms frozen in place as if they had been trying to fend off the flames.

President Alejandro Toledo issued an immediate ban on fireworks and officials seized huge boxes of rockets, crackers and other pyrotechnics from stores near the scene of the fire.

"We have 264 confirmed dead . . . But the removal of debris continues and because we have found people asphyxiated . . . we believe the final toll will easily reach 300 people," said Raul Duenas, head of the Lima municipal security board.

Other victims, including small, unrecognizable corpses of children, were still inside burned shops that once sold dolls, paint, or playing cards. Around 30 percent of the corpses found so far were of children, civil defense officials said.

"All of a sudden rockets were exploding," survivor Jose Fernandez, who suffered burns on his arms, told RPP radio.

"People began to run and I couldn't get out with everyone pushing. I saw flames where people burned alive," he said.

The civil defense agency said it would likely have a final death toll by Monday, but said search efforts would be suspended overnight. Some 180 people were reported injured.

Chief firefighter Tulio Nicolini said the "chain reaction" blaze, which was sparked around 7:30 p.m. on Saturday and raged for several hours, was the worst he had seen in more than 40 years.

Witnesses said the blaze began when a merchant lit a multi-blast explosive called "dragon artillery shell" to demonstrate it for a customer. That firework set off others and fire spread quickly to nearby buildings, the witnesses said.

The fire was concentrated around a busy commercial intersection in downtown Lima, a city of 8 million, burning a score of surrounding buildings, including some homes, and leaving the blackened hulls of at least a dozen cars, some with burned passengers inside.

Civil defense officials said the toll was so high because the initial explosion occurred in a crowded area, packed with fireworks and other flammable items, that offered few evacuation routes.

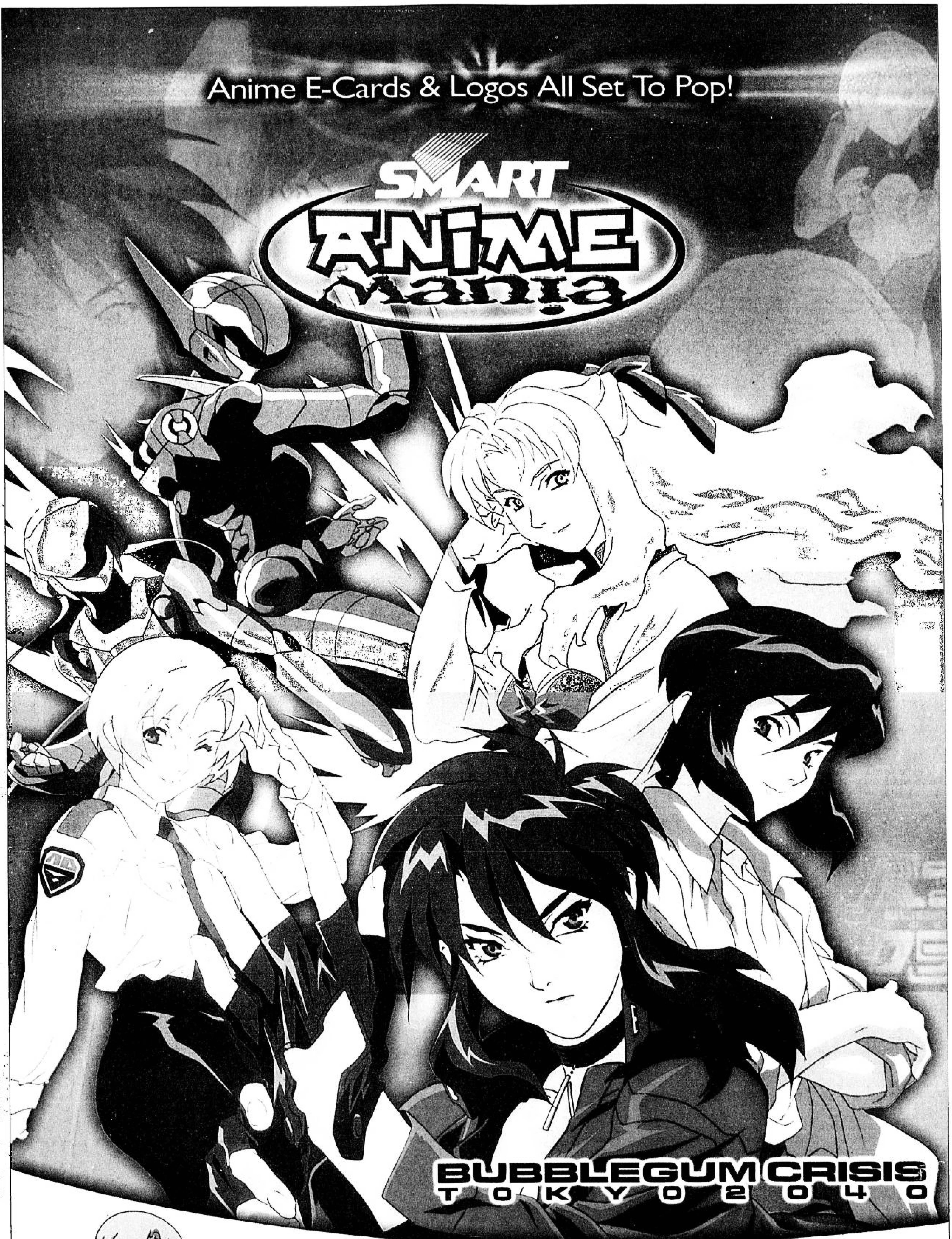
"There are various reasons. In the galleries there are too many stores. It was also Saturday night, near the end of the year, and many people were buying fireworks," said Juan Luis Podesta, head of Peru's civil defense agency.

He said the ignited fireworks created a "ring of fire" in which many people were trapped—77 bodies were found on the street—while others took shelter in stores, where they also were burned.

Some locals blamed an excess of informal street vendors and poor traffic regulations for the tragedy.

"It was a time bomb," said David, a security worker at the shopping gallery. He said the fire spread extremely quickly—"like a dynamite fuse"—and too many cars on the narrow street impeded escape.

Toledo cut short a holiday to visit the scene and he declared Sunday and Monday days of national mourning. *Reuters*



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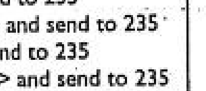
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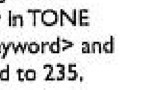
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W. Visayas workers to get ₱10 wage hike

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The regional wage board in Western Visayas has approved a P10 increase in the daily minimum wage for workers in the private sector, way below the P50 hike being pushed by moderate labor groups.

In an order dated Dec. 19, the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Board (RTWPB) raised the daily minimum wage in the region to P180 from the present P170. It will take effect on Jan. 16 except in the sugar industry, which will be effective on Feb. 16.

The order will affect around 2.35 million workers in the private sector in Western Visayas employed in the sugar industry, agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, hospitals, cottage/handicraft and retail/service sectors.

The order was issued after the board conducted public consultations with representatives of labor and employers' groups in various parts of the region between August to September.

Five of the seven-member board approved the increase. Labor representatives Wennie Sancho and Natalio Sitjar voted against the order citing the need for a higher increase.

They said the majority of the members of the board "focused their attention and accord (sic) their sympathy purely for the good and interest of Capital and not the minimum basic needs of workers and their families."

The increase is way below the petition for a P50 increase in the minimum wage filed by three labor unions affiliated with the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines in the middle of this year.

Employers, however, have said a substantial increase would force many firms to shut down or lay off workers. They said an increase in labor cost would also drive up the cost of production resulting in higher prices of commodities.

Ramon Cua Locsin, executive vice president of the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Iloilo, which includes owners of around 150 hardware and small grocery stores, said the P10 increase was "affordable."

The militant Kilusang Mayo Uno in Panay, however, said the increase was "crumbs" and an "insult" to workers and their families.

"We deserve more and many business firms could well afford our demands for a substantial increase," said Aurelio Bosque, KMU spokesperson in Panay.

The KMU did not file any petition for an increase before the regional wage board. They instead demanded a legislated wage increase of P125 daily and sought the abolition of the wage board.

The KMU said the increase would hardly make a dent on the worsening poverty in the region, which registered a six-year high as of last year.

The National Statistical Coordinating Board regional office reported that the number of people considered below the poverty line increased from 39.9 percent of the population in 1997 to 43 percent last year, the same level recorded in 1994.

Families whose annual per capita income fell below the poverty threshold reached 526,072 in the region more than double the 244,029 reported in 1997. Roughly, this means around 3.1 million persons are living below poverty line from out of the 6.2 million population in the region last year.

The region's poverty incidence placed it sixth among 15 regions but the highest in the Visayas.

THE ROAD to prosperity is long and dreary especially for this farmer of San Simon, Pampanga, whose ricefields have been damaged by floods.
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

MILF leader denies being involved in Zamboanga massacre

By Hernan P. De La Cruz
PDI Mindanao Bureau

PAGADIAN CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front denied involvement in the Dec. 27 massacre that left 10 civilians killed and three others wounded in Naga, Zamboanga Sibugay.

Ustadz Shariff Julabbi, MILF regional official of Zamboanga Peninsula, accused the military of sowing intrigues "in order to attribute this to us."

Also killed was one of the suspects, Kamlon Abori, who was apparently hit by his fellow raiders.

Brig. Gen. Angel Atutubo, deputy chief of the Army's First Infantry Division, said Abori was the deputy of Barahama Ali, an alleged member of an MILF lost command group engaged in extortion and kidnapping-for-ransom.

Barahama is a former village councilor of Upper Pangil in Ipil town.

Julabbi said there was no Kamlon Abori in their roster.

"What we had was Kamlon Awalon," he said, adding that Awalon was removed from the MILF after he joined a bandit group that operates in the Triple SB Complex in Zamboanga del Norte.

Government soldiers are combing Sitio Sigdi in Barangay Kaliantana in Naga and Sitio Lugba in Barangay Uppper Pangi in Ipil.

Atutubo said the suspects have split into small groups.

It was unfortunate that the military was quick to blame the MILF for the incident, Julabbi said.

Although there are MILF members in Naga, "there are also a lot of other lawless elements operating in the area," he said.

The MILF has been observing the ceasefire agreement it forged with the government, he said.

The suspects fired at huts in Barangay Sta. Clara and Barangay Crossing in Naga town around 10:30 p.m. Thursday.

The suspects fled when police and Army soldiers arrived in the area. Upon reaching a fishpond area, the suspects took with them four civilians, who were later found dead in Barangay Kalinyana.

Aburi's body was also found near the four slain fishpond caretakers.

The slain civilians were identified as Diogene Bajar, 25; Jomar Magtala, 14; Alberto Duque, 17; Romulo Carages, 18; Esperaldo Borquite, 35; Gaudencio Manolo, 25; Mateo Calum, 20; Alejandro Vidal, his younger brother, Pablito; and Romualdo Dela Pena, 30.

Wounded were Roberto Andrino, 49; Richard Monter, 9 and his sister Hazel, 5.

Marawi's new bishop vows to continue dialogue

OZAMIZ CITY—Newly ordained Bishop Edwin A. de la Peña, prelate of Marawi, pledged to continue the active dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Lanao del Sur.

The 47-year-old native of San Juan, Siquijor, was ordained bishop here last Thursday in a ceremony attended by hundreds of priests and religious mostly from the dioceses of Dipolog, Iligan, Pagadian and Ozamiz, and the prelature of Marawi (DOPIM). Several bishops from Mindanao also graced the occasion.

Also in attendance was a cousin of Dela Peña, Julito Cortes who is set to be ordained as auxiliary bishop of Cebu this month.

Most Rev. Antonio Franco, apostolic nuncio to the Philippines, served as his principal consecrator.

De la Peña said in an interview over radio dxDD that his ordination was a great honor for the Marawi prelature, considering that it is the smallest local church in the DOPIM ecclesiastical area.

His ordination, he said, is a recognition of the prelature's important mission of bringing peace and brotherhood among its Christian and Muslim populations within its apostolic jurisdiction.

"This is for Marawi," he exclaimed in a message before the more than 2,000 people at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral.

Among those who cheered dela Peña as he donned his red cap for the first time were several Maranaos, whom he said were their dialogue partners in Lanao del Sur.

The Muslim-Christian dialogue in Lanao, the main pastoral ministry of the Marawi prelature, enters its ninth year. It has its beginnings through the efforts of the late Bishop Bienvenido Tudtud.

The prelature, when created on Dec. 8, 1976 by Pope Paul VI, was aimed at offering a reconciling presence to Muslim Filipinos within its territorial jurisdiction through "Dialogue of Life and Faith," an ordination souvenir read.

Dela Peña said he takes strength in carrying out the Muslim-Christian dialogue effort from the Papal Nuncio who told him "not (to) be discouraged by the difficulties" of the ministry.

"Fr. Rufus Halley's life has provided me a closest example of courage and strength to achieve peace and brotherhood (among Muslims and Christians)," he said.

In tribute to Fr. Rufus, De la Peña said "because of the incident (murder of Fr. Halley), there is really that necessity for continued dialogue."

De la Peña succeeded Msgr. Desmond Hartford, who was kidnapped and later released, as prelate of Marawi. He is the second bishop to hold the office after Msgr. Bienvenido Tudtud who was killed in a plane crash in the mid-1980s. *Ryan D. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Bandits sow terror in Camarines town

NAGA CITY—Armed bandits have been terrorizing several upland barangays in Calabanga town, Camarines Sur, the Philippine National Police reported.

Chief Insp. Marcos Rivero, Calabanga police chief, said the bandits killed at least one male resident of Barangay Siembre just before Christmas.

But Rivero said they already have leads after capturing seven suspects.

He declined to reveal the name of the bandits' leader so as not to preempt police operations.

Rivero said the bandits are armed with M16 rifles and engage in extortion and robbery.

A resident of one of the villages said the bandits, who wear bonnets, operate like the Dose Pares group, an armed band that gained notoriety some five years ago.

Supt. Arnie de los Santos, Camarines Sur police provincial director, said the PNP has already laid out the operation plan to capture the bandits.

Calabanga Mayor Ruben Medroso said another robbery incident occurred at the boundary of Calabanga and Tinambac towns.

Medroso said the woman victim has identified one of the bandits because she was able to remove the bonnet.

The woman was lucky that the bandits just went away after the robbery without harming her, Medroso said.

In Bonbon town, the same group of bandits was suspected to have staged the hostage-for-ransom incident that victimized a former councilor.

Chief Insp. Manuel Gisic, Bonbon police chief, said the leader of the bandits is known only as Ka Sonny.

Gisic said the bandits demanded P1 million from the family of the hostage victim but later asked several M16 rifles when their demand could not be met.

The bandits later freed the former councilor when the family could not produce any of the demands.

The long holiday prevented the police from filing the case at the Regional Trial Court on Thursday, Gisic said. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Recovery not easy for Rizal Day blast victims

TACLOBAN CITY—The family of Rowena Chua and her niece Eunice Cañete, two of the fatalities in last year's Rizal Day bombings in Metro Manila, observed their first death anniversary on Sunday by attending an early morning Mass at the Sto. Niño Church here.

Rhodora, sister of Rowena, said her family and Eunice's, including many of their relatives, proceeded to visit their graves at the Chinese cemetery of this city after the 5 a.m. Mass.

Rhodora, Rowena, and Eunice went to Manila on Dec. 26 last year to attend the wedding of a cousin and to do some pre-New Year shopping.

Rowena, 28, and four-year-old Eunice came home in sealed coffins while Rhodora was admitted at the Metropolitan Hospital in Binondo, Manila, for the burns she suffered after a bomb exploded in the Light Rail Transit that they took.

Eighteen people died in the bomb explosion that ripped through the LRT train in Blumentritt.

Rhodora has physically recovered from the incident but said she still felt discomfort around her neck and had difficulty hearing in her right ear. Rhodora was slammed down on her right side during the bombing.

Emotional recovery is, however, not easy for Rhodora and her family. "My parents especially my mother, still cries whenever they remember the incident," she told the INQUIRER.

Rhodora said she had not been going out since the Rizal Day bombing because she does not want to be asked about the incident. "But I know this too will pass," she sighed.

Cynthia A. Borgueta PDI Visayas Burea

Eastern Visayas: Poverty hounded half its people

By Vicente S. Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau

(Conclusion)

TACLOBAN CITY—The year 2001 commenced with a big bang in Eastern Visayas as political parties prepare for the synchronized national and local elections, but it ended with a whimper as the worsening economic situation continued to hound the region.

YEAR-ENDER

In between, the start of the new millennium showed the region coping with an insurgency problem that refuses to disappear, disease outbreak and natural calamities affecting the crops and the people, graft and corruption accusations pestering local governance, and poverty as a constant companion of nearly one-half of its people.

In short, the year was generally a bleak one for the region. However, the people are looking forward for a good year in 2002 when various multi-million-peso infrastructure projects and "anti-poor" programs of the government will be implemented as they hope that some of the region's main agricultural products, particularly abaca and copra, will command a better price.

Inflation rate in Eastern Visayas stood at 4.4 percent in the first quarter but the figure rose to 7.5 percent in the third quarter.

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) said the 7.5 percent inflation rate for the third quarter in Eastern Visayas "was the highest so far since year 2000."

It was also "the highest rate among the 16 administrative regions in the country," according to the National Statistics Office.

The national average inflation rate dropped from 6.3 percent to 6.1 percent, said the NSO.

The same Neda report revealed that the employment rate at the start of the third quarter was estimated at 91.4 percent, while the visible underemployment was around 18 percent.

The Department of Labor and Employment recently reported that 25 firms in Eastern Visayas have retrenched 325 workers during the first 11 months of the year.

More woes

"The regional economy slowed down (during) this period. Threats on the country's peace and order situation, high commodity prices, weaker peso, high power rate and unstable power supply were among the constraints that confronted the region," the Neda third quarter report said.

Aside from its economic woes, Eastern Visayas was also confronted with petty crimes and insurgency. The Philippine National Police claimed that criminality in the region was under control, but hinted that the insurgency gave the agency a headache.

Recently, news items citing police intelligence reports disclosed that 28 police stations in the region, mostly in Samar Island, are targets of attacks by New People's Army guerrillas.

On Jan. 5, a band of NPA rebels attacked the police station in the interior town of Lope de Vega, Northern Samar. This resulted to the death of a month-old baby. On Feb. 12, the rebel group overran an Army base camp in a village of San Jose de Buan, Samar, killing seven soldiers and wounding five others.

And when the election fever was heating up, the NPA rebels were reported to be demanding access fees from candidates who wanted to campaign in some areas they reportedly control. The fees, according to reports, were not only in the form of money but also firearms. The military and some of the candidates later confirmed these reports.

Recently, the NPA rebels executed two men in San Jose de Buan and killed a young boy when they strafed a house in the village of Gamay in Northern Samar.

The military, on the other hand, has scored some victories in the fight against insurgents, like in early June this year when soldiers killed six rebels in a 20-minute firefight in Las Navas village in Northern Samar. Several rebels also gave themselves up to authorities, some bringing along their firearms when they surrendered.

The government has granted amnesty to 460 former rebels in the region.

Romualdez debacle

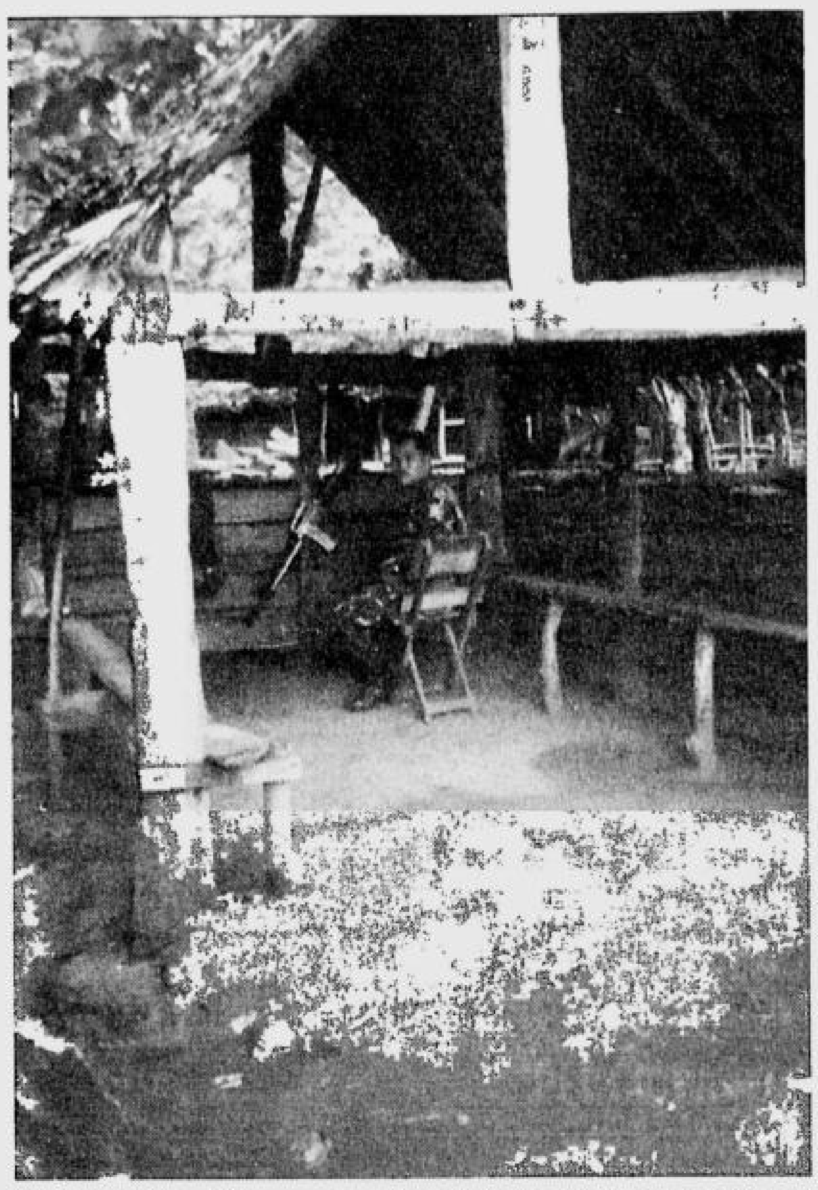
In the political front, the result of the May 14 elections, which saw brothers Alfred and Carlos failing in their bids for two of the five congressional seats in Leyte, was not the only drawback suffered by the powerful Romualdez clan this year. The Presidential Commission on Good Government has padlocked the properties of the Romualdezes in Barangay Olot, Tolosa, Leyte.

The PCGG will allow the former first lady to enter and use the property if she seeks permission from the Commission. The Olot property, which Imelda calls their "ancestral home," is where she resides when she is in Leyte.

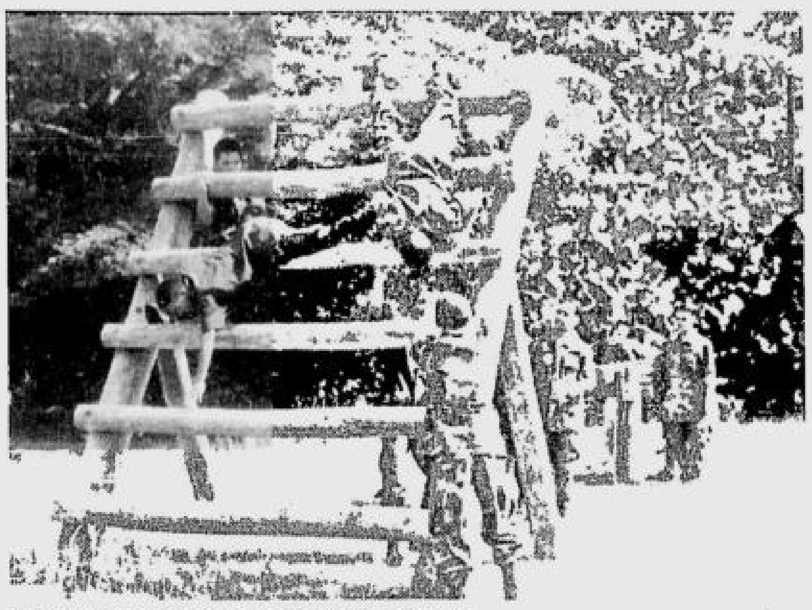
The PCGG also revived the graft cases it filed against Imelda's brothers, former Leyte Gov. Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez and incumbent Tacloban City Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez.

Lonely soldiers, rebels pine for home, peace

(From page A1)



DUTY-BOUND soldier mans an outpost in what seems to be the middle of nowhere.



THESE are your boys in training endlessly.

PEACE at last by the riverside for this NPA soldier somewhere in northern Mindanao.

NPA soldiers hang tough as they brave the heavy currents to reach a barrio where they are made to feel as though they never left home.

PHOTOS BY TINA CASSION/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

who understands my work, explains to them why I have to be away," Cpl. Ramil Gabay, who hails from Pangasinan, said.

Duty calls

When duty calls they are left with no choice but to stay.

"My superiors said I have to stay to reinforce the security of the camp and the areas of our responsibility, so I have to do it although I do miss my family in Isabela very much," Capt. Simeon Talosig said.

Others, who are fortunate enough to have their families with them, either as permanent residents of the camp or as visitors, were the most happy.

"My family visited me, so we are spending the holiday season together. My morale is really very high because I'm with them. This is what every soldier is wishing for, to be with our family," said T/Sgt. Eugenio Tolentino whose family is in Abra.

NPAs lonely, too

For their NPA counterparts, the holiday season is also an occasion for their families to come together.

"We have children's assembly in the camps during this period. Some comrades opt to go home to their families. This way, we can spend quality time with members of our families that live far from our areas of work," said Ka Derek Labrador, who is based in the NPA's Northern Mindanao Region (NMR).

Cell phone technology has also reached the communist guerrillas. Each takes turns using the cell phones issued to each unit to call their family.

"When I hear the voice of my wife or my kids, I'm happy already. I just imagine that I'm with them and talking face to face with them," Ka Dodoy said.

Oftentimes, letters from families reduce them to tears.

Letter from a mother

"My mother, in her letter, said she had been crying because I was not with her on Christmas. But I promised to be with her this New Year," Ka Martin said.

Indeed, life is hard for the combatants of both sides. They endure the cold night, meager food and long hikes in the mountains. They brave the scorching sun or the heavy rains.

Becoming a guerrilla is voluntary. NPA members understand very well the sacrifices that they have to make because of their choice. They know that death is inevitable, yet they persevere because they know that their death will not be in vain.

Ka Silaw said: "I became an NPA soldier because I understood deeply that to overcome poverty, war is inevitable. I come from a family of farmers and I know how it is to till a land that is not ours without proper compensation."

"When I first joined the NPA in 1984 I had to overcome first my loneliness. I missed my parents and siblings. Then there was the physical terrain as I was used to riding vehicles when I was still in the city," Ka Doroy said.

"When I go to the barrio and relate with the people, it is as if I have a family already," Ka Derek added.

Marriage within the revolutionary movement is filled with trials, although these become less insurmountable if both partners are with the NPA.

The movement provides for the family of its combatants, although they do not lead a luxurious life. As they say, the people they serve are living in poverty so why live lavishly. It is enough for them to meet the basic needs of their family.

Low pay

It is the same for the soldiers. With salaries of as low as P3,000, a soldier can barely meet his family's basic needs.

The government may have given the highest priority to the AFP modernization plan, but soldiers complain that it is not intended for salary increases but for the purchase of military hardware.

Yet they continue serving the military not only because of the noble cause of serving the people, but also because of the job it provides.

"It's difficult to be without a job. I come from a poor family and I still have to help my parents even if I'm already married. I did not finish college, so I joined the Army," Pvt. Rene Desanto said.

Road to peace

While both the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF), the political arm of the NPA, plan to resume the stalled peace negotiation in January, many are hoping that a just and lasting peace will come out of the talks.

"The soldiers are really the ones praying hard for peace because we are in the frontline," Ochotorena said.

"I hope we can achieve peace because with this war, Filipinos are fighting against each other. If the peace talks are successful, we can now go back to our barracks and turn to our main task of ensuring external security. That way we can establish our family in one area," a government soldier said.

Ka Derek, also a spokesperson of the NDF-Northern Mindanao Regional Committee, said a just and lasting peace could be fast-tracked if the government and the NDF signed the remaining areas covered by the peace agreement.

The peace agreement covers five areas: human rights and international humanitarian law, socio-economic reforms, political and constitutional changes, disposition of troops, and cessation of hostilities.

"With the signing of these agenda, there is no use for the armed struggle because these are what we are fighting for," Ka Derek said.

Both armies acknowledge that poverty is the root cause of the war.

"The propaganda of the NPA is issue-based. Poverty makes the people susceptible to their propaganda," Ochotorena said.

Ka Derek said achieving peace was simple if genuine agrarian reform, nationalization of the country's industries and stopping graft and corruption in the government were pursued.

"If all these are achieved, the NPA will cease to exist. If not, the problem will not persist even if they militarize an area," he said.

Mikey-Angela romance sizzles in chilly Baguio

(From page A1)

Montenegro's brother Greg, an Economics graduate of Wharton University in Philadelphia, is scheduled to marry movie actress Ana Roces on Jan. 20.

But the Montenegros pay no mind to the old folks' belief, called *sakot*, which prohibits siblings from marrying in the same year.

"We are keeping our wedding a secret. We want to keep it as private as possible. We will divulge our final plans in the coming months. *Mahirap na kasi. Alam mo na, baka maudlot* (It's difficult. You know, our plans might not push through)," the younger Arroyo said.

Arroyo will be the first among the three presidential children to get married.

Montenegro, 28, blushed and smiled like any other girl in love when Pampanga Vice Governor Arroyo, 32, told family members and their closest friends on Saturday that "she is the girl who made him very happy."

"I am flattered. I am also happy with him," Montenegro said.

Holding hands

Arroyo and Montenegro were holding hands while they were at the exclusive Baguio Country Club here with their family and friends on Saturday. The First Family spent their New Year holiday in this city.

The couple was also seen shaking hands with everybody and gamely posed for photographs when the INQUIRER chanced upon them at the BCC verandah.

Arroyo kept whispering to Montenegro as the INQUIRER peppered him with questions. On the other hand, Montenegro, who admitted to be "camera shy," just kept nodding to whatever her boyfriend was telling her.

Asked about their wedding plans, Arroyo jested: "Actually, it is (movie actress) Ruffa (Gutierrez) and I who are getting married."

This drew giggles and laughter from Gutierrez herself who was sharing a table with the couple, together with Montenegro's sister Rose and mother Rosario (Charito to family and friends and a first cousin of Mr. Mike Arroyo).

Montenegro and Gutierrez met in London where the former was studying International Business at Schiller University in 1996. Angela graduated elementary and high school from the Assumption College.

Seated next to their table were some of the couple's close friends from show business who joined them in their Baguio vacation.

Arroyo declined to confirm whether Gutierrez, Montenegro's friend, will be part of their wedding entourage. He further refused to divulge details of their planned wedding.

He, however, said they are waiting for their one-year "compatibility test" to end in 2002 before they finally tie the knot.

Not whirlwind romance

He and Montenegro met on March 17 at a family reunion. Arroyo said he was smitten by Montenegro's *mestiza* looks and decided to ask her for a date.

The INQUIRER learned that Montenegro was initially disinterested in Arroyo because he is her second cousin. But after consulting family members and getting their approval, Montenegro went out on several dates with Arroyo until she said "Yes."

Contrary to reports, their relationship could not be considered a whirlwind romance.

"We really get to know each other very well like mature adults. *Talagang pinag-isipan* (We have thought about it many times). It's not true that our relationship is a whirlwind romance. We are very familiar with each other," Arroyo said.

Montenegro said she will not stop her husband-to-be from making movies even after they get married. In fact, she said, she is fully supporting Arroyo's movie career.

"(You were asking whether or not) I'll allow him to go bold and daring?" Montenegro joked as Arroyo smiled at her. "No, I will not stop him from making movies. I'm very supportive of his chosen career."

To prove her point, she said she had been watching her boyfriend's movies.

She had watched Arroyo's recent movie with teen superstar Judy Ann Santos. But she said she particularly liked Arroyo's "Di kita Ma-reach," one of six official entries to the Metro Manila Film Festival where Arroyo was nominated as best actor.

Though he lost to "Bagong Buwan" lead actor Cesar Montano, Arroyo thanked the MMFF jurors for recognizing his performance in the movie.

Dispelling reports that his movie was a flop, Arroyo, who has appeared in 13 movies, claimed that his movie is doing well at the box-office.

"I was told that my movie raked in P1 million during its first two days of showing in Metro Manila alone. That means the public appreciated our hard work. How much more if it's shown in the provinces, especially in my home province of Pampanga? I'm sure it will earn more," he said.

Not jealous

"I really like his latest movie (with actress LJ Moreno). No, I'm not jealous of his leading ladies," Montenegro said.

While planning for his wedding and performing his functions as a public servant, Arroyo said he is set to make three more movies this year to be produced by various film outfits.

"My dream role is to lead in an action-drama. I don't care about (who is going to be my) leading lady," he said, looking at Montenegro.

Montenegro smilingly agreed and held on to his hand.

Political museum: Looking back to know who we are

(From page A1)

erhood, justice, freedom and honor necessary in our political leaders remain the key to move the nation forward against great economic odds and far from petty politics.

The museum, an NHI production, features the five political high points in history and offers a "continuing education" badly needed not just by young students but more so by people in government.

NHI president Carlos Trillana III set up the country's first museum on political history, explaining that the National Museum presented the more artistic side of the Philippines and not the battles that had been fought to be where we are now.

Who we are

"Despite the many problems we have today, we should not stop the efforts to build a consciousness of who we are," said Llanes who created the museum concept and wrote the text and narration by historical character. He added that the government should be reminded to look inside the country for solutions to problems and not rely mainly on foreign support.

He said it was necessary for government officials to strengthen their consciousness of how the nation was built to be able to push the country to progress and not be stalled by the selfish ambitions of the country's administrators.

With the trend of globalization, Filipinos need a renewed awareness of their beginnings, of how their people fought for the freedom being enjoyed now, of how leaders then inked and paid for their principled commitment to their countrymen with their own blood.

Tour

An hour-and-a-half tour of the museum on the NHI ground floor at T.M. Kalaw Street traced the political road from the sporadic barangays established in the early 16th century to the Edsa Shrine, which has seen the fall of leaders unfaithful to the legacy of freedom and honor.

The political history would have included the May 1 siege of Malacañang by Estrada supporters but time constraints prevented the NHI from producing materials on the most recent violent incident in history, Llanes said.

A facsimile of the original full-page "Panunumpa sa Katipunan" written in blood by KKK recruit Pedro de la Cruz using the secret code is in a glass case, along with a replica of the medallions worn by KKK leaders Andres Bonifacio, Deodato Arellano, Pio Valenzuela, Emilio Jacinto and other founders of the movement.

Also on display are the original manuscript of Rizal's "Noli Me Tangere" and a facsimile of the assignment paper signed by Bonifacio tasking Jacinto head of the revolutionary army waging battle north of Manila.

It took the NHI a year and a half to complete the concept and finishing touches on the museum. SoundImages made reproductions of manuscripts and other rare documents while Eva Penamora did the artistic design.

A video presentation titled "Lupang Hinirang sa Pagbuo ng Bayan" ushered guests, including relatives of former President Manuel Quezon, to the high-tech lessons on political history.

It featured "Ang Sinaunang Bayan," "Rebolusyon Tuloy Republika," "Pagkakabansa ng Bayang Sakop," "Pagkakabansa ng Bayang Malaya," and "Pagpapanibagong-Lakas ng Bansa," which signaled the takeover of President Macapagal-Arroyo last January.

Murals and dioramas lined the 16th to 18th century political tales, with touch-screen and interactive machines easily accessible to visitors who would like a deeper background on the period.

Crowd-drawers

The biggest crowd-drawers were the hologram presentation of the Katipuneros' declaration of war in the Pamitan Cave on a hill in what is now San Mateo, Rizal, where they had written on the wall: Viva La Independencia.

"We need to learn about ourselves in order to be whole, especially because the orientation now is to go out of the country," Llanes said.

The history professor of UP Diliman and president of the group Adhika noted that the evolution of the national spirit seemed to be faster with the Edsa revolts than in the earlier years against Western occupants.

He said the Edsa spirit was something that could be cultivated again because of the stronger consciousness of Filipinos.

The museum will be open starting tomorrow from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., free of charge. Individuals can come anytime, but large groups of tourists or students need to call 523-9043 for reservation.

Get a kick from 2002, Year of the Horse

(From page A1)

like World War 1 (1918), World War 2 (1942), The Great Depression (1930), the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966), and the Great San Francisco Earthquake (1906).

"Chinese astrologers have long observed that the water horse year following the year of the metal snake includes periods of war, upheaval and political tension," according to one website.

The Horse influence also means more people travelling or socializing, the swift-footed beast "preferring social activities, debates and company," according to one astrology website.

Where it does not belong

Quoted in another paper, Rev. Wong Seng Tian of the Sheng Lian Taoist temple in Quezon City sees the Water Horse year to be a "disappointing" period "in many areas" where there would be high expectations that would not be met.

His logic is quite simple: The mythical horse will be venturing into "territories where it simply does not belong"—such as water.

The horse will try to swim but it will be a "laborious task," he said.

Simbulan, who hosts an AM radio show and an oft-quoted media source on the subject, said the Horse aspect of 2002 will manifest in the country's "luck" in natural resources such as mining and agriculture.

She predicts a major "oil find" in the country that will finally give the Philippine economy a major boost.

This year will be "difficult" for the manufacturing and electronics sector, she claimed.

All-time high energy

The water element of this Horse year will be felt by way of the emotional issues dominating people's lives, Simbulan explained.

At least one Internet write-up, from an Australian New Age website, jibed with Simbulan's prediction "Events will be very rapid and very emotional energy at an all time high."

"The major spiritual drive of the Water Horse is a move to reaching the higher self within and to retain the ideals of liberty but not without humanitarianism."

Simbulan said this should be taken both as encouragement and warning:

"On the positive side, people will have more inspiration and internal strength. *Mas may tiwala sa sarili* (more faith in oneself) because it will be a period of deeper soul-searching," she said.

On the negative side, she said, there will be more "intrigues" sown among people and their relationships if such heightened emotionalism goes into excess.

And yes, 2002 is prone to "intrigues" and will not spare—or will continue to hound—even President Macapagal Arroyo, she said.

GMA with hat of 3 heads

The only advantage going for Ms Macapagal this year is that "she would have a better picture" of the forces out to harm her.

Simbulan said that when she first had a "starlight vision" of the President sometime in April 2001, she saw her wearing a hat, on top of which were "three heads."

The "heads," she said, stood for what was then unrecognizable negative entities affecting her important decisions.

"When I had a vision of her shortly last December, it was basically the same figure (she donning a hat, the three heads) but this time the heads came out more clearly as monsters."

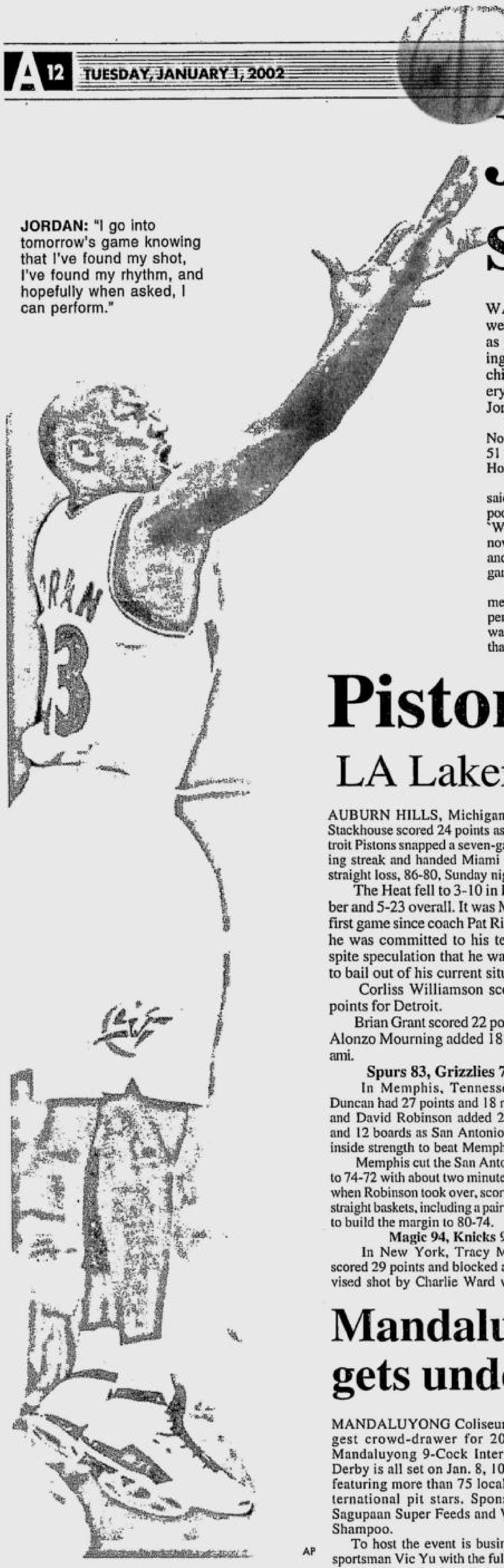
"Now she knows that these are monsters and how she should deal with them."

If Simbulan's predictions on Ms Macapagal's Water Horse year seem to borrow from real-life political headlines, here's what she said about deposed president Joseph Estrada.

"He's experiencing (bad) karma now," she said, apparently referring to his disgraceful fall from power and eventual criminal prosecution and incarceration.

"But it will be his chance to undergo soul-realization. He will realize that not all the people closely surrounding him are loyal and sincere."

Simbulan said Estrada was actually "a Gandarva (Sanskrit for Big Angel)" in his past life, "but when he became human he forgot that he was a Gandarva."



JORDAN: "I go into tomorrow's game knowing that I've found my shot, I've found my rhythm, and hopefully when asked, I can perform."

AP

Jordan reminder: I can still play this game at 38

WASHINGTON —After a few weeks of describing his comeback as part of a plan to turn the Washington Wizards into a winning franchise, Michael Jordan reminded everyone that it's also about Michael Jordan.

A six-point game tarnish his legacy? No way. He came back to throw down 51 Saturday night against the Charlotte Hornets.

"I had the six-point game," Jordan said. "And I knew with that game, that poor outcome, people were going to say, 'Well, maybe it wasn't a great idea.' And now I'm sure they're going to say less - and understand that I can still play this game at 38."

Jordan felt he had to make a statement on two fronts: that his career-low performance against Indiana last week wasn't a sign that he's washed up, and that the Wizards' two-game losing streak wasn't the start of another long skid.

He delivered on both counts. The Wizards won 107-90, avenging a loss in Charlotte three days earlier.

"Everybody's anticipating three, maybe four losses in a row," Jordan said. "So taking the leadership was important."

Jordan made 21 of 38 shots from the field, 9 of 10 free throws and had seven rebounds and four assists in 38 minutes in his 39th regular-season 50-point game. Sunday morning he was up for a workout with his trainer before an afternoon practice ahead of Monday's game with the first-place New Jersey Nets.

"I go into tomorrow's game knowing that I've found my shot, I've found my rhythm, and hopefully when asked, I can perform," Jordan said. "I don't think I can do (50 points) every night, but I think I can be a threat and a force out there for 38 minutes."

Jordan resumed his daily workouts a few days ago after suspending them for three weeks because of his sore knee.

"I feel a lot better," Jordan said. "My knee's getting better."

Jordan scored the Wizards' first 13 points against the Hornets, giving coach Doug Collins worry and delight at the same time. For a while, it seemed Jordan would score 70 - and that Washington would lose.

"I was scared to death," Collins said. "I said `Guys, I'm afraid that come the fourth quarter there's not going to be anything in the tank.' We're going to be saying, `Who's going to score for us?' But thank God that didn't happen."

Jordan was scoring at will, fighting through screens for jumpers and blowing past defenders. But he was the entire offense for more than a quarter, and there was no defense at the other end.

Jordan had 24 in the first quarter, but the Wizards led by just one point, 29-28. Collins had broken his usual substitution pattern and played Jordan the entire 12 minutes.

"When he's on a roll like that, you just ride it," Collins said. "You don't start getting cute, start running plays for other people. That's when you coach yourself right out of here."

Finally, Hubert Davis started to chip in, hitting four 3-pointers in the second quarter. Davis (14) and Jordan (34) had 48 points as the Wizards took a 56-51 halftime lead.

"If I score 34 points at the half, I'd like to see us up by 10 or 12," Jordan said.

The Wizards, who have been playing without injured starters Christian Laettner and Richard Hamilton, finally gave Jordan the help he needed in the third quarter. Solid defense in a 13-0 run led by Davis, Chris Whitney, Jahidi White and Popeye Jones - with no points from Jordan - put the Wizards in control. *AP*

Pistons halt 7-game losing slump

LA Lakers bounce back

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan—Jerry Stackhouse scored 24 points as the Detroit Pistons snapped a seven-game losing streak and handed Miami its sixth straight loss, 86-80, Sunday night.

The Heat fell to 3-10 in December and 5-23 overall. It was Miami's first game since coach Pat Riley said he was committed to his team despite speculation that he was ready to bail out of his current situation.

Corliss Williamson scored 14 points for Detroit.

Brian Grant scored 22 points and Alonzo Mourning added 18 for Miami.

Spurs 83, Grizzlies 79

In Memphis, Tennessee, Tim Duncan had 27 points and 18 rebounds and David Robinson added 21 points and 12 boards as San Antonio used its inside strength to beat Memphis.

Memphis cut the San Antonio lead to 74-72 with about two minutes to play when Robinson took over, scoring three straight baskets, including a pair of dunks to build the margin to 80-74.

Magic 94, Knicks 90

In New York, Tracy McGrady scored 29 points and blocked an ill-advised shot by Charlie Ward with five seconds left as Orlando closed the game with an 18-2 run and beat New York.

The collapse was the latest in a series of them for New York, which has shown a penchant lately for blowing leads late in games. Losing for the fifth time in their last six home games, the Knicks were booed off the court.

Latrell Sprewell led the Knicks with 28.

Lakers 114, Rockets 90

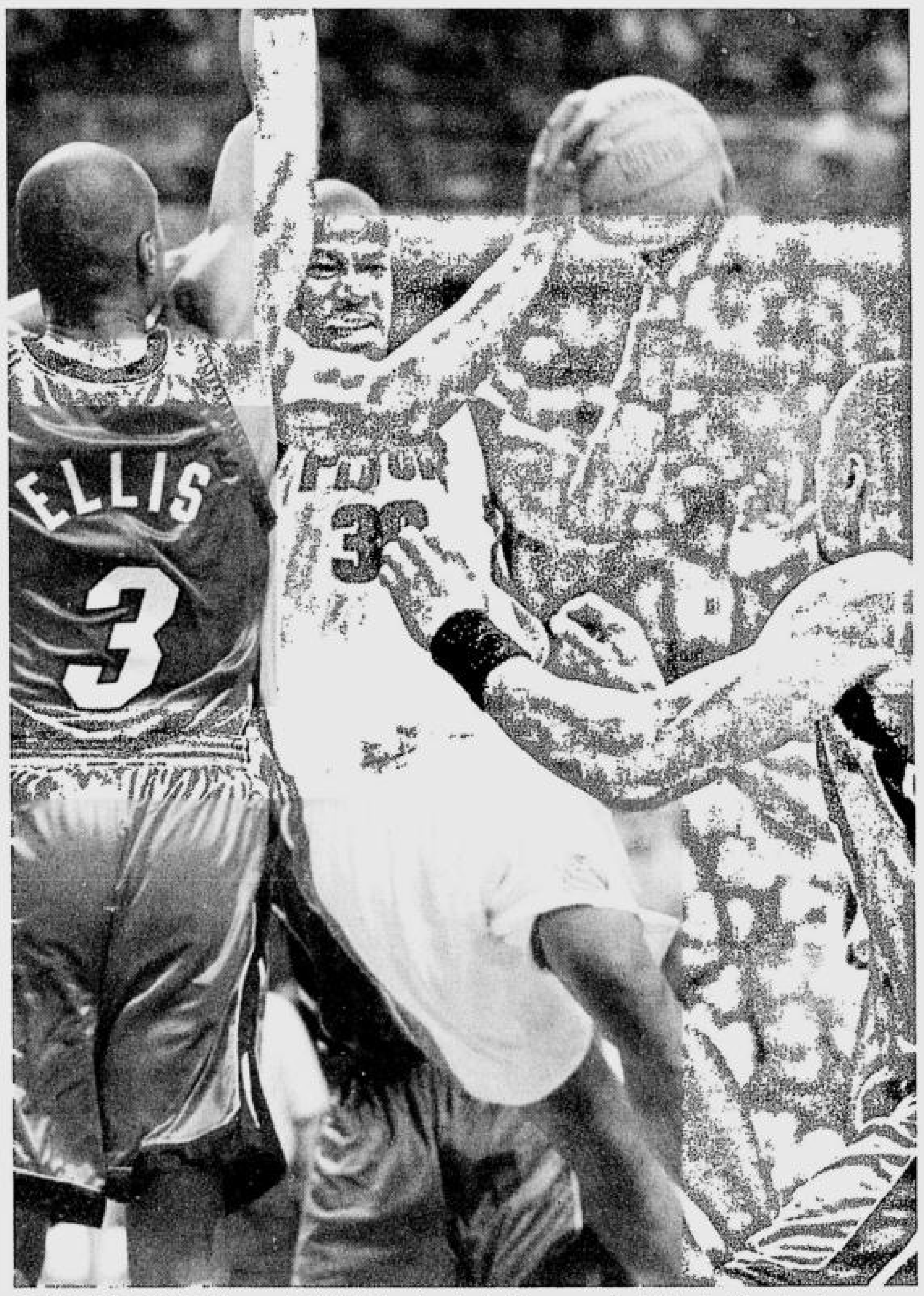
In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant had 16 points and 11 assists, and every Los Angeles player scored as the Lakers ended a two-game losing streak with a win over Houston.

The Rockets were without Steve Francis, out with the flu, and Walt Williams left the game in the third period shortly after he took a hard fall. Houston's Kevin Willis was also ejected with 7:15 remaining when he drew his second technical foul.

Shaquille O'Neal missed his fourth of what is expected to be a five-game absence with an arthritic big toe on his left foot. Los Angeles is 2-2 without him. *AP*

COMPLETE RESULTS

Pistons 86, Heat 80; Spurs 83, Grizzlies 79; Magic 94, Knicks 90; Kings 109, Celtics 94; Lakers 114, Rockets 90.



DETROIT'S Cliff Robinson (middle) tries to wiggle his way out of Miami defenders Laphonso Ellis (3) and Alonzo Mourning in the third quarter. AP

Mandaluyong derby gets under way Jan. 8

MANDALUYONG Coliseum's biggest crowd-drawer for 2002, the Mandaluyong 9-Cock International Derby is all set on Jan. 8, 10 and 12, featuring more than 75 local and international pit stars. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo.

To host the event is businessman-sportsman Vic Yu with the full support of the United Cockers Association of the Philippines (Ucap).

Among the confirmed participants are defending champion Chuck Berry of Oklahoma, USA and his Filipino partner Ram Lopez, Bobby Jones of Texas and Paul Sparks of Oklahoma.

A tough field of 10 entries will be fielded by the Bacolod group composed of Mayors Juancho Aguirre, Bob Cuenca and Baby Chua, LGBA Breeder of the Year Choy Ampil, Otic Geroso, Ed Guanzon and Lancey dela Torre.

Ilo-ilo will be represented by Kenny Chua while Zamboanga is headed by Boy Primallion, Manny Dalipe and Jun Pe. From Mindanao is veteran cocker Cong. James Chiongbian, while guest participants from Manila include Henry Tan, Albert Yam, Roger Yu, Mayor Buboy Ramos and Carding Ng.

For other inquiries, please contact 534-4110, 531-4003, 531-4005 and 535-2341.

SPORTSWATCH

'Assa' gamble pays off

SYDNEY— Sydney to Hobart winner Assa Abloy was leading the Volvo Round the World Ocean Race third leg to Auckland Monday after gambling on a more northerly route. But with 1,000 nautical miles to cover before reaching New Zealand, the Swedish boat's British skipper Neal McDonald was not getting carried away. He said neither he nor his navigator Mark Rudiger was deterred by the experience in leg two from Cape Town, when they surrendered a podium position by making a tactical move that proved disastrous in the final stage heading in to Sydney and saw them drop back to sixth place. *AP*

Hewitt lifts Aussies

PERTH, Australia—World top-ranked Lleyton Hewitt overcame a second-set lapse to beat Roger Federer 6-3, 0-6, 6-4 Sunday and clinch a round-robin win for Australia over Switzerland at the Hopman Cup team tennis tournament. Earlier, Alicia Molik gave Australia a 1-0 lead with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Miroslava Vavrinec. Molik and Hewitt later combined to beat the Swiss pair 6-3, 6-1 in the mixed doubles to give Australia a 3-0 win. The matches were played before a Hopman Cup record crowd of 8,486 indoors at the Burswood Dome. *AP*

St. Silvester race on

SAO PAULO, Brazil —Fresh from their New York City Marathon victories in November, Ethiopia's Tesfaye Jifar and Kenya's Margaret Okayo are this year's favorites to win the traditional year-end St. Silvester road race in South America's biggest city. On Monday, Jifar and Okayo will be among the 17,000 athletes - 15,000 men and 2,000 women - from some 20 countries that will run the 15-kilometer (9.3-mile) route along the wide, skyscraper-lined avenues and through the narrow, twisting streets of this city of 10 million people. *AP*

Rams rip Colts, 42-17

ST. LOUIS —Marshall Faulk scored four touchdowns and totaled 165 yards rushing and receiving as the St. Louis Rams beat the Indianapolis Colts 42-17 on Sunday. Kurt Warner and Torry Holt also had big games for the Rams (13-2), who clinched the NFC West with one game to spare against one of the worst defenses in NFL history. Warner threw three touchdown passes, two of them to Holt. Faulk had 118 yards on 25 carries and seven receptions for 47 yards. *AP*

Batangas golf course features 'World 18'

THE rolling hills of Lipa City have become the site of a truly unique golf course. With course shaping and grassing right on target to complete the course by next year, the Summit Point Golf and Country Club promises local golfers a taste of some of the best golf holes in the world.

The "World 18" concept, which is being done under the direction of renowned golf architect Robert Trent Jones II, features a sampling of 18 popular golf holes from all over the world that have been made to blend into the local terrain.

"We want our golfers to experience the playing characteristics of these great holes," says the prime mover, former Board of Investment governor Conrad Leviste. "While we may not be able to create an exact replica of the ocean at the Pebble Beach, for example, golfers who step into the course will get the feel of the length, contours and the strategy involved in the play of each hole."

Robert Trent Jones II had a major hand in choosing which holes to feature in the course. His extensive experience in golf course design and architecture virtually guarantees a golfing experience that will be unique in itself.

Among the chosen holes are: the 10th, 11th and 12th holes or better known as "Amen course" of Augusta National, the 18th hole of Harbour Town in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina which is better known as the Lighthouse hole, the 14th of St. Andrews and the 10th hole of Pebble Beach.

Summit Point Golf & Residential Estates is a joint project of the Summit Point & Development Corporation and the Sta. Lucia Realty Development, Inc. and, with almost half of the back nine now shaped and grassed; Leviste is optimistic that the construction of the golf course will meet its completion targets.

The site is projected to be the last golf course construction in Lipa City as local restrictions have come into effect allowing only two courses in the city. It is located next to the LIMA Industrial Estate, which is rapidly becoming one of the fastest developing industrial zones in the Southern Luzon area.

The 220-hectare property will have residential lots along the golf course where members can relocate to and enjoy the cool climate of Lipa City. The project also boasts of a Country Club and a golf clubhouse, both designed by G & W Architects.

Traveling to and from Summit Point Golf & Residential Estate and Manila is much faster and convenient with the completion of the Southern-Tagalog Arterial Road (STAR).

Happy Old Year

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

YOU must have heard it said everywhere: Happy New Year. You will continue to hear it said: Happy New Year.

We are a unique race. We love to greet, if not smile, at people we even barely know. But we do it only this time of year, though.

During the Yuletide, it echoed a lot: Merry Christmas, Happy New Year. From today up to maybe Jan. 6, or maybe even beyond, you will still be saying it, hearing it said: Happy New Year. Sometimes, it's sweeter hearing that than hearing your name called. Only a happy birthday greeting can beat the sweet ring of Happy New Year.

Why do we say Happy New Year?

It's our way of wishing someone to have a happy and prosperous life in the coming year. Just by saying Happy New Year to someone symbolizes your being an unselfish fella. Blessed are those who say it with sincerity.

We love to say that Christmas is for the kids.

Think again, fellas.

Christmas is more for adults than kids, the reason being that we are pressured to produce for the kids or we end up taunted as spendthrifts.

But then, after us adults have done our job, we feel boundless joy at seeing the kids jubilate over the gifts given them. That's one manifestation of how beautiful the saying "it's better to give than to receive" is.

I guess no particular person has invented the greeting Happy New Year. We all invented it. Even the wounded, the victims of war, must still have the courage to say it. For the greeting symbolizes hope.

But have you ever heard someone say Happy Old Year, after hearing Happy New Year? If you haven't yet, let me do it: Happy Old Year.

I mean it.

Despite 9/11 and the bad times, I had a good year. 2001 wasn't exactly a winner for me. I didn't get to buy my Volvo, if not a Lexus or a Kompressor. I failed to visit South Africa. I guess many of you out there did not have a rosy year as you had expected it to be. Oh, well, how many times has it been said that you can't have 'em all, that you can't win 'em all. Life's but a balancing act. God is and will always be our balance.

The old year wasn't that good to you?

Think again, fellas.

God allowed 2001 to pass us by. We survived it. If only for that, the year just ended still deserves our praise.

Happy Old Year!

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▨ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

All set for annual PSA Awards Night Jan. 11

Reyes, Delasin lead top achievers

REYES

DELASIN

THE PHILIPPINE Sportswriters Association (PSA) gets the ball rolling on the local sporting scene with the staging of its annual Awards Night on Jan. 11 at the Holiday Inn hotel.

Everything is in readiness for the affair which will fete the top achievers of the 2001 season led by billiards champion Efren "Bata" Reyes and Fil-American golfer Dorothy Delasin, adjudged as the Co-Athletes of the Year.

On hand to honor the two and the rest of the awardees is President Macapagal-Arroyo, making her first ever PSA Awards Night appearance since assuming the highest office in the land a year ago.

Basketball stars Danny Ildefonso (pro) and Ren Ren Ritualo (amateur) show the way among eight athletes to be bestowed the major awards that also includes Manny Pacquiao (boxing), Eduardo Buenavista (track and field), Liza del Rosario (Bowling), Frankie Miñoza (golf), Pat Dilema (Jockey of the Year) and Wind Blown (Horse of the Year).

The PSA Awards Night has for sponsors Photokina Marketing and Red Bull with support from the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC).

Gold medal winners in the Kuala Lumpur SEA Games head the local athletes to be given citations, among them are the athletics team of Ernie Candelario, Fidel Gallenero, Dandy Gallenero, John Lozada, Elma Muros-Posadas, Cristabel Martes, Roy Vence, Purita Joy Marino (archery), RP men's team (basketball) and the billiards trio of Lee Van Corteza, Antonio Lining and Warren Kiamco.

Others to be cited are the RP bowling team (Chester King, Christian Suarez, Engelbert Rivera, Benito Dytoc and Leonardo Rey), RP trio team (Leonardo Rey, Chester King and CJ Suarez), RP doubles team of Arianne Cerdena, Wally Mendoza (fencing), Juvic Pagunsan (golf), John Baylon (judo), karatekas Jose Ma. Pabillore and Gretchen Malalad, Jasmin Luis (shooting), taekwondo jins Veronica Domingo and Ma. Nelia Sy-Ycasas, wushu's Mark Rosales, Willy Wang, Jerome Calica and Marques Sanguiao, motorsports' Glenn Aguilar and Kenneth San Andres and powerlifters Erlina Pecante and Antonio Taguibao.

For spearheading a grassroots development program and efficiently staging the Batang Pinoy Games and Mindanao Friendship Games, the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) is on top of those to be given special citations by the sportswriting fraternity.

Also receiving special citations are Pilipinas Shell (corporate sponsor-active chess), Petron (corporate sponsor-taekwondo), Caltex Philippines (corporate sponsor-boxing), individuals Andy del Rosario and North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol and the trio of Holiday Inn, Photokina Marketing and Agfa for sponsoring the weekly PSA Forum.

Posthumous awards will also be awarded to prominent personalities such as Alfie Almario (PBA player), Nereo Andolong (PCSO chair/POC president), Armando Besa (boxing promoter), Tito Eduque (PBA coach), Fely Fajardo (PBA coach), Chris Monfort (PFF secretary general), Larry Mumar (PBA player) and Inocencia Solis (Asian sprint queen).

Sports officials from both the PSC and the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), presidents of the various National Sports Associations (NSAs) as well as members of the corporate community are expected to grace the star-studded affair.

PSA president Lito Tacujan said those who will not receive their invitations before the Awards Nights may pick up theirs before the rites.

Established in 1949, the PSA was founded by a group of sportswriters that include former Press Secretary Teddy Benigno.

Horseracing yearender: Wind Blown definitely above the rest

BY EDWIN VILLANUEVA

HORSERACING in the year that just ended definitely belonged to Wind Blown.

So dominating was the Hermie Esguerra galloper who won seven major stakes races, including a second straight romp in the prestigious Presidential Gold Cup and a season-ending conquest of the Classic Open Championship.

With 10 victories last year, Wind Blown earned a total of P11.8 million, installing himself as the highest-earning horse in the country.

And the bounty could be bigger this year if plans for Wind Blown to race abroad materialize.

"We already received invitations for him to compete in Japan, Singapore or Malaysia in 2002," said Esguerra, the 47-year-old sportsman-businessman from Plaridel, Bulacan who shot to racing prominence after acquiring Wind Blown from close friend Sandy Javier late in 2000.

Wind Blown's 2001 campaign was tainted only by a regular race loss to Sun City but the Hazm-Wind in My Hair progeny simply rebounded with might by ruling all succeeding races he participated in.

Other major events which Wind Blown won were the First Gentleman Silver Cup, Founders' Cup, Gran Copa Division I, TAB Philippines Cup and the Marho Breeders' Cup Classic.

In recognition of his exploits, the Philippine Sportswriters Association named Wind Blown as 2001's Horse of the Year, an award which experts said should have been given to the colt in 2000.

Relegated to second fiddle last year in the face of Wind Blown's explosive stint was Silver Story, whose Triple Crown victory was besmirched by suspensions on jockey Jonathan Hernandez and trainer Ricardo Paman Jr.

A new kid on the block, the filly Golden Ballet, also made waves by posting six straight wins, making her a strong bet for the coming Triple Crown series.

Pat Dilema, buoyed by Wind Blown's success, emerged as the best jockey, edging Fernando Raquel, Jr., while Javier shared honors with Putch Puyat as the country's top breeders, and Johnny Sordan wound up as the best trainer.

The Philippine Racing Commission underwent a leadership shakeup but what was acknowledged most was Jimmy Dilag's reappointment as one of its commissioners.

Records were registered again when the Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners (Marho) led by Puyat and Javier staged the 6th Philippine Breeders' Cup Classic, while the Philippine Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Organization (Philtobo) carried on with the 2nd Mitra Cup Festival, likewise in highly successful fashion.

A new horseowners' group, the Samahan ng mga Horse Owners sa Pilipinas or SHOP, was formed later in the year which was also highlighted by President Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo's widely-acclaimed attendance during the PGC Day.

Indeed, President Arroyo's appearance in the PGC hinted of positive things to come for local racing in the Year of the Horse.

WIND Blown with Pat Dilema on the saddle. VAL HANDUMON

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

POOL: World Professional Pool Championships 2001 - Day 7, 2nd Session at 8 a.m.(r), Day 8, Quarterfinals and Semifinals at 10 a.m. and 12 noon (r), Day 9, Final at 3:30 p.m. (r) on ESPN

Rack 'Em Up - Mosconi Cup Finals at 7 p.m. on ESPN

World Pool League 2001 at 8:30 p.m. on ESPN

GOLF: Tiger's Triple at 9 a.m. (r – 8:30 p.m.) on Star Sports

PGA - The Tour Championship, Second Round at 2 p.m. (r), Third Round at 10 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

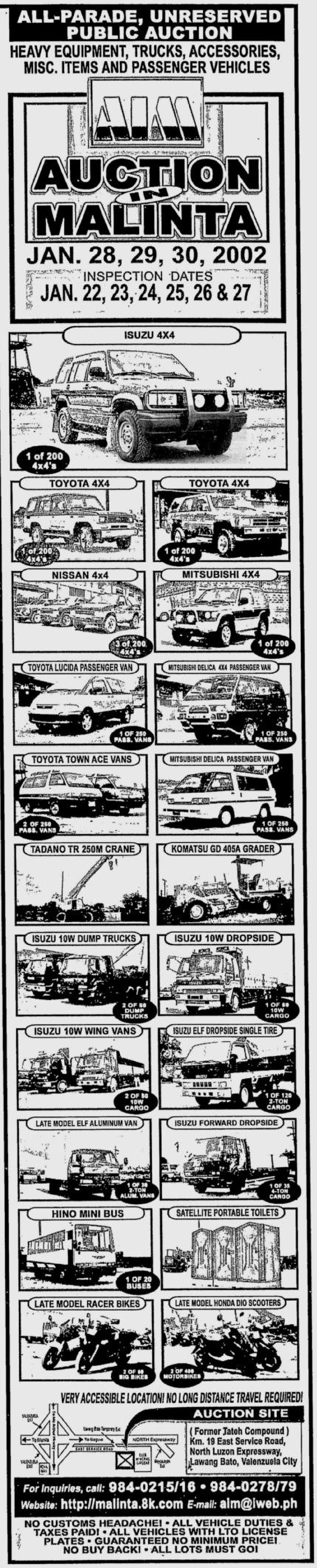
V Foundation Celebrity Golf Classic at 10:30 p.m. on ESPN

SOCCER: English Premier Football League at 7 a.m. (r) and 12 noon on Star Sports and at 12 midnight on ESPN, Highlights at 6 p.m. on Star Sports

Tiger 5s 2001, Day 1 Highlights at 11 a.m. (r – 7:30 p.m.) on Star Sports

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: 2001 AXA Liberty Bowl tomorrow at 2:30 p.m. on ESPN

BOWLING: CGU Asian Bowling Tour - Hong Kong Men's Highlights at 9:30 p.m. on ESPN



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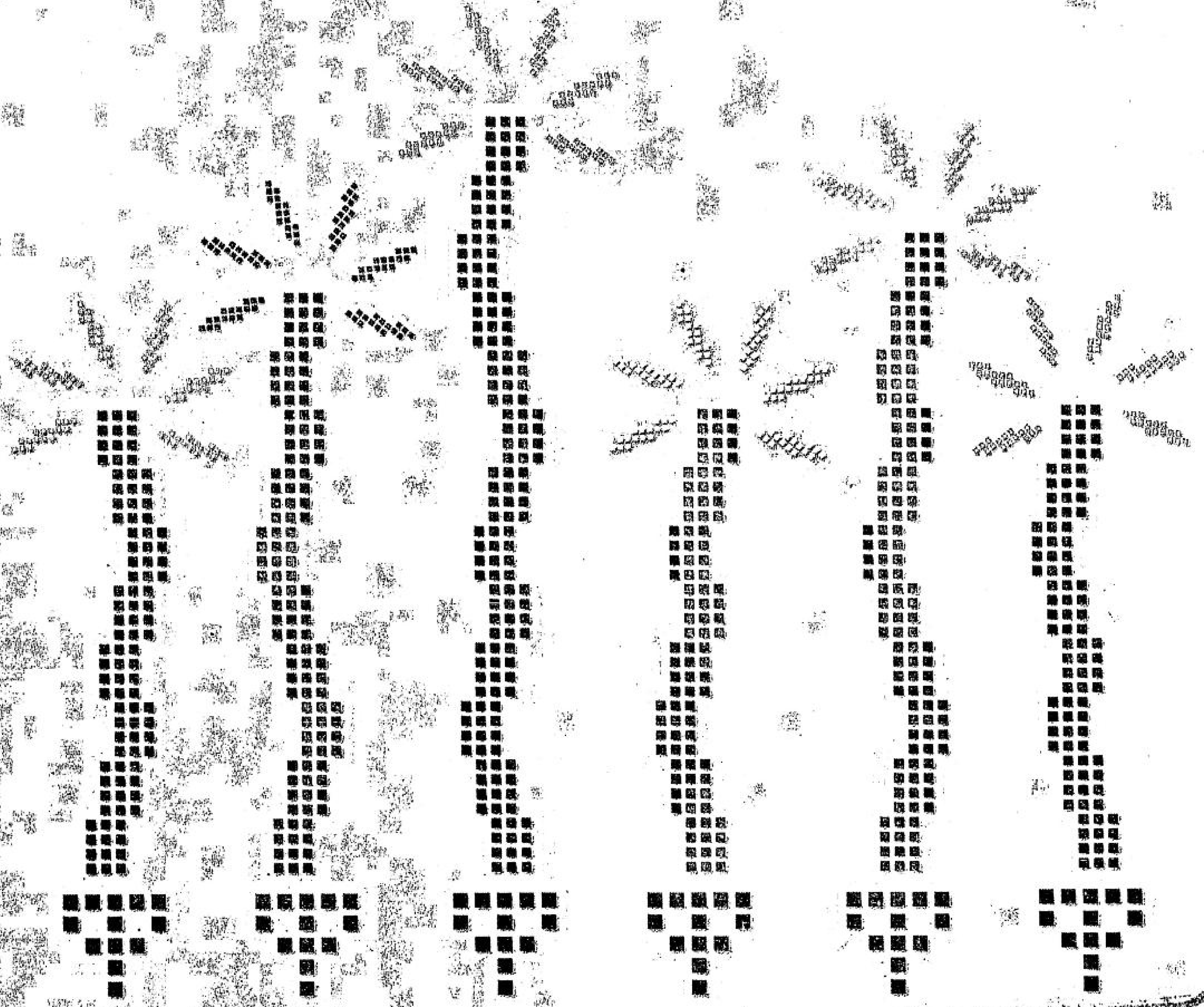

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On Target: Lacson behind plot to bomb metropolis? A16
Hope and love in the time of despair A16

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Pasay police chief orders probe of SWAT men accused of murder A16

THE SOUND OF 2002. This girl is having a blast with a giant trumpet. Safe but noisy.

1 killed as 'baby rocket' sets off fire in Quezon City

By Agnes E. Donato

A FIRECRACKER, known as a baby rocket, yesterday set off a fire in Quezon City that killed a man, whose family sold firecrackers, and injured his wife, mother and a neighbor.

The victim's family sold firecrackers, including the baby rocket that triggered the fire that killed Jonathan Mendoza, 28, according to investigators.

Mendoza's death came even as the Department of Health and the Philippine National Police repeatedly warned the public to stop using firecrackers to celebrate the New Year, or to at least follow their guidelines on the safe handling of the firecrackers.

News on the first day of the new year is usually filled with reports of scores of people getting wounded or losing body parts in firecracker explosions during the New Year's Eve merrymaking, and of photos and video footages of firecracker victims bleeding and howling in pain and vowing in tears never to play with firecrackers again.

Mendoza died while undergoing treatment at the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center in Quezon City.

His mother Miriam reportedly suffered severe burns and was in critical condition in the same hospital.

Also injured were Mendoza's wife Bernardita and their neighbor Rudy Manansala. The latter suffered hand laceration and abrasions when he tried to help the Mendozas.

District fire marshal Senior Supt. Jacinto Diquiatco said the fire started shortly before noon when John. Ralph Acosta was buying firecrackers from Bernardita at the Mendoza residence on K-J corner Kamias Road, Quezon City.

Acosta asked if he could sample one of the baby rockets, Diquiatco said. But when the baby rocket was lighted, it zoomed under the table at the firecracker stall and immediately set off the other firecrackers on display, the fire marshal said.

The firecracker explosions started a fire. Bernardita escaped more serious injuries but her husband mother in law were trapped inside the house until fire fighters rescued them.

The Mendoza family business was selling party favors, but they decided to also sell firecrackers in time for the New Year's Eve revelry, investigators said.

The two-story residential and commercial building that included the Mendoza residence was razed before the fire was put out about 30 minutes after it started, the investigators added.

Bernardita was brought to the Quezon City Medical Center, while Manansala was treated at the East Avenue Medical Center.

In Cainta, Rizal, about 200 people were rendered homeless and a fireman was hurt in a fire that broke out in a densely populated slum community yesterday morning.

Police said the hour long fire, which began at about 8:15 a.m. yesterday, started in a house in Sitio Balanti, Barangay San Isidro and spread quickly to other houses. But the timely arrival of firemen from the different fire stations of Rizal province and Marikina City prevented the blaze from going out of control, police said.

One of the responding firemen, Anton De Jesus of the Marikina Fire Station, was hurt when he fell from one of the burning structures. He was rushed to a nearby clinic for first aid treatment for the minor injuries he suffered, police said.

1 KILLED/ A16

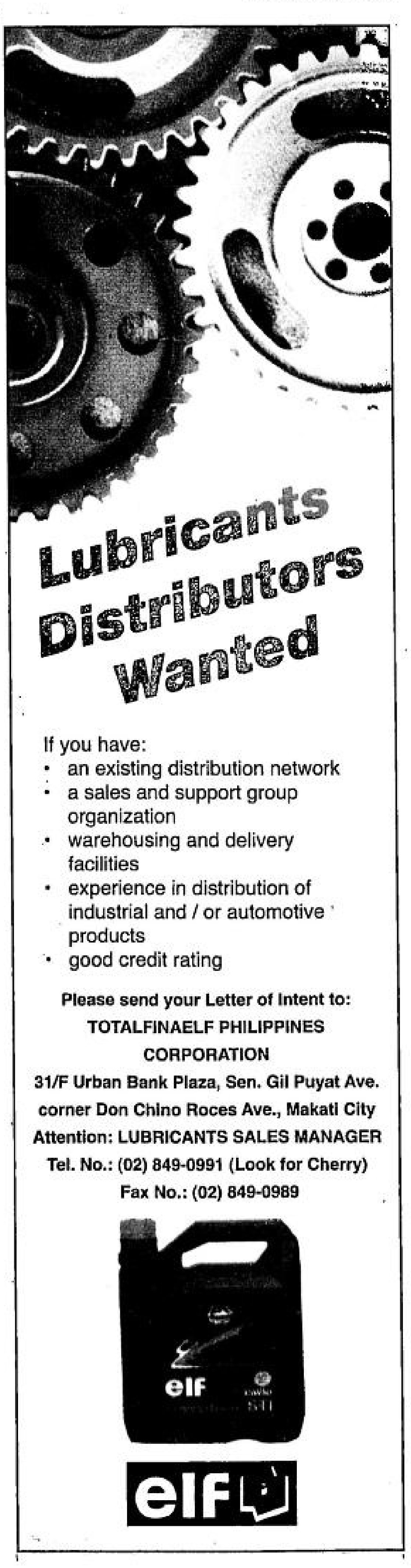
Homicide raps filed against BMW driver

By Alcuin Papa

HOMICIDE charges have been filed last week against a businessman who accidentally ran over two housemaids, killing both, with his BMW last week in Makati City.

Marc Louie Tagle, 25, single, of 1586 Cypress St., Dasmariñas Village, Makati City, faces homicide charges filed on Dec. 27 before the City Prosecutor's Office. Tagle is now enjoying temporary freedom after he posted a P30,000 bail bond.

HOMICIDE/ A16



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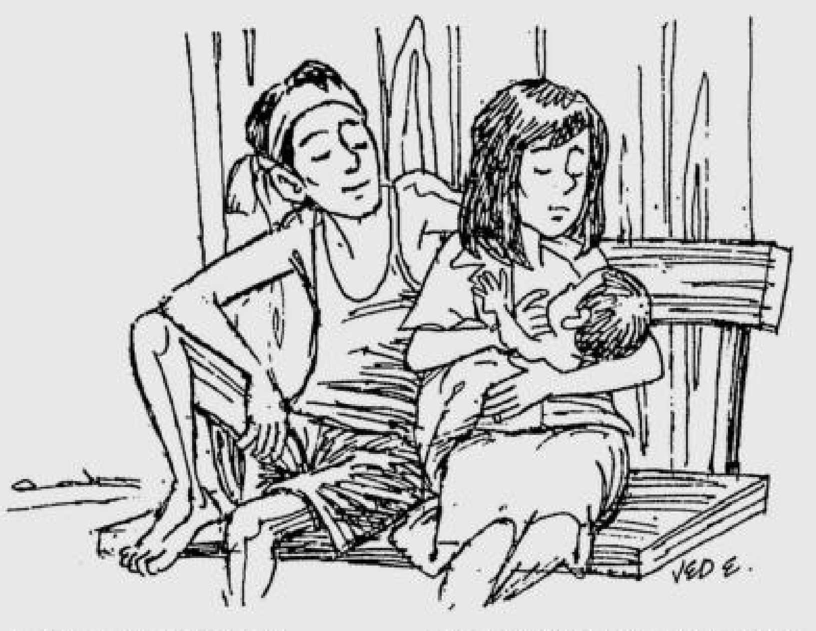
Hope and love in the time of despair

By Nini Valera



ON CHRISTMAS Day, pedicab driver Ruel Pied and his wife Rebecca slept the celebrations away.

"We did not have a feast," says Pied, 29, speaking in Filipino. "We just slept. We also didn't have relatives to go to for Christmas gifts. My sister is in Cavite, and she has her own family to worry about."

Pied and Rebecca are among the many men and women who come to Manila every day to escape the poverty from their provinces, only to find harsher realities in the big cities. Instead of finding a better life when they both came to the city about a decade ago, they found each other, and have since then loved each other enough to want to have children and go on hoping and dreaming.

Three months ago, after three ceasarian childbirths that ended in the deaths of the infants 24 hours after seeing life, Rebecca gave birth to a healthy baby boy they named Ronnel. Suckling at her breast on the day of this interview, Ronnel looked like any well-loved, ordinary baby.

"My first three children...they died a day after I gave birth to them," Rebecca relates in Filipino. "The doctors said they were malnourished. Their resistance was down. I'm happy I still had Ronnel. They said he would be my last baby."

That the couple, living on Pied's earnings of "P200 on a good day" and "only P80 on an ordinary day" as a pedicab driver in the bedroom community of Barangay Nayong Kanluran on West Avenue in Quezon City, have brought into their life a new life is a story of hope in itself.

"Ronnel brings us hope," Pied says simply. "He makes me want to work harder. He makes me think that there could be a better life for us. We may not have found it here in Manila. But we may find it if we went back to Biliran, Biliran and till our small plot of land."

Pied is hoping to save for the fare to go back home to Biliran in Leyte. P1,200 per person, he says. But Rebecca thinks it would be better if they went back to her Masbate hometown, a fishing village where she can make fishing nets and help her husband earn a living.

"He could be a fisherman, and I could have a sideline there making nets," she says wistfully. "We can live by the sea and live off it. There is too much poverty in Biliran and we may not find the better life that we want there. Ruel came here to escape the poverty there. I can't see how we will not be poor there."

Rebecca, too, had known poverty in Masbate. Which is why she came to Manila in 1991 to work as a maid. At age 13, Rebecca, now 24, already had two years experience as a domestic helper in Masbate, earning P250 a month, which she doubled working as a maid in one of the richer households in Barangay Kanluran.

Pied had also tried several jobs before he ended up as pedicab driver.

"I worked in a construction as a mason," he says. "I can be handy around the house making repairs."

But the jobs became few and far between, and only driving a pedicab turned out to be a regular preoccupation.

Peid, too, had often relied on the relatives as poor as he is to survive in the city. He and Rebecca, and now Ruel, live in a makeshift structure on an empty lot, which his uncle looks after as a caretaker. He and a cousin sleep inside the structure, while Rebecca and Ruel sleep inside a small security guard's house, using canvas to cover the cold cement floor.

"We have not had sex for the, longest time," Pied laments. "The last time was when we lived in Bulacan."

He does not see a future brighter than he already has in Manila, so he dreams of taking his family to Biliran. He does not see how the government could help the poor, saying "it has never cared about our welfare and how we live in squalor and misery."

How Pied's family lives is a showcase of survival and hope in a cruel society. Breast-feeding Rebecca survives the day eating P5 cups of instant noodles. But she is proud that she had given Ronnel his first taste of processed baby food. Galunggong is their main fare for lunch and dinner, which Rebecca cooks with firewood gathered from a nearby construction site. Pied treats himself to a bottle of strong beer once a week, "to help him sleep." He smokes about 10 sticks of cigarettes a day to stave off the hunger as he ferries his passengers around the neihborhood, Rebecca says.

New Year's Day would not be any different for this family. They plan to sleep off the revelries even if the rest of the country welcomes the year 2002 with firecracker blasts, and the rest toast it with champagne. Pied says they would be very lucky if they would have a piece of ham on their table. Only hope keeps their dreams alive.

Lacson behind plot to bomb metropolis?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

WHEW! We should thank our lucky stars alert military intelligence agents seized 100 blocks of plastic C-4 explosives before they could be used to maim or kill people and destroy property.

The seized explosives, of the very handy C-4 type, were capable of blowing up big buildings. They were confiscated from members of the Navy commando team that used to be assigned with the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Forces (PAOCTF).

Being held for investigation are Lt. (jg) Anthony Miraflor and eight of his men from the disbanded Special Reaction Unit, an elite unit within the elite Special Warfare Group (SWAG) of the Navy. SWAG is the local counterpart of the US Navy Seals. Miraflor and his men are in the custody of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

* * *

If the name Miraflor sounds familiar to you, he and his men were pinpointed as being involved in recovering illegal drugs dumped into the sea from ocean-going ships entering the country. Miraflor and his men, who were expert divers, did it for PAOCTF which reportedly was heavily involved in the traffic of illegal drugs.

The notorious PAOCTF, whose members were implicated in the abduction and murder of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer, was headed in a concurrent capacity by then Philippine National Police chief Panfilo Lacson.

* * *

And surprise! Surprise! Who do you think interceded for the release of Miraflor and his men after they were arrested by Isafp agents? Their former boss, Sen. Panfilo Lacson!

Lacson wrote a strong letter to Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes asking for the immediate release of Miraflor and his men.

Why was Lacson very interested in the immediate release of Miraflor?

* * *

Before that question can be answered, here's a piece of important information about the C-4 explosives seized by the Isafp agents from Miraflor and his men:

According to Isafp sources, they were of the same type used in the bombings of public places in Metro Manila on Dec. 31, 2000.

The explosives seized recently by Isafp agents were issued to Miraflor and his men in Sept., 2000, three months before the terrorist bombings that killed at least 17 persons.

* * *

What did that mean? That the explosives were already in the custody of Miraflor and his men before the Dec. 31, 2000 bombings. Could they have planted and exploded those terrorist bombs?

Was Miraflor's group planning to explode more bombs exactly one year after the bombings in public places? They could have if they were not arrested and the explosives confiscated on Dec. 28 by Isafp agents, according to my sources.

After the Dec. 31, 2000 attacks, then PNP and PAOCTF chief Panfilo Lacson arrested some alleged members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Lacson said the MILF wanted to avenge its defeat at the hands of the military earlier that year.

The Moro suspects were later released because there was no evidence against them.

* * *

My sources in the military and police intelligence say that Lacson could have masterminded the Dec. 31 bombings.

The terrorist attacks, the sources said, were meant to divert public attention from Erap's impeachment trial.

The second most powerful man in the Erap administration (second only to Erap himself), Lacson had everything to lose if his boss got booted out of office as a result of being found guilty in the impeachment trial. He was looking forward to the 2004 presidential election. Erap had to remain in office at any cost.

But as in all the other cases against him, Lacson could not be pinned down on the bombings. He was very good at covering his tracks.

* * *

Diverting public attention from important issues by terrorist bombings is not new. The Marcos government did that so he could justify the imposition of martial law on Sept. 21, 1972. At the time, Marcos had become very unpopular because he wanted to hold on to power even after his second term would have expired.

But Marcos was a "benevolent" terrorist compared to Erap and Lacson, according to my intelligence sources. In the bombings that led to martial law declaration, there were no fatalities. In the Dec. 31 bombings, 17 people lost their lives and scores of others were badly wounded.

Lacson, a confessed fan of Marcos, outdid his idol because he is more ruthless.

* * *

This is only speculation, but it was to Lacson's best interests that he interceded for the release of Miraflor and his men who were caught in possession of the powerful explosives.

Under intense questioning, who knows what Miraflor and his men might tell their interrogators at Isafp.

Lacson probably wanted Miraflor and his men to know that he was not leaving them to the dogs. That way, he still would get their loyalty and they would keep mum.

* * *

When he was still a young Constabulary lieutenant assigned at the Metrocom Intelligence and Security Group (MISG), Lacson learned that loyalty was a two-way traffic.

If you showed concern for your men, so the military mindset goes, they would not squeal on you if they were caught carrying out "dirty missions."

If Lacson would not show concern for Miraflor and his men they might implicate him in the destabilization plot.

Pasay police chief orders probe of SWAT men accused of murder

THE CHIEF of the Pasay police yesterday ordered an investigation on the allegation by two witnesses that two of his men robbed and killed a messenger on Dec. 21.

But Insp. Wincy Biswilan, chief of the Pasay Special Weapons and Tactics, who has direct jurisdiction over the accused policemen, defended his men, saying they could not have done the criminal act.

On Sunday, two witnesses surfaced, claiming that SPO2 Melanio Advincula and SPO1 Felimon Batula killed messenger Edward Provido while trying to seize from him P890,000 he was delivering on Dec. 21.

"They're good policemen, they couldn't do anything like that," said Biswilan yesterday.

Supt. Eduardo dela Cerna, Pasay police chief, asked the policemen's accusers to come out and confront his men.

Biswilan said Advincula and Batula might have been identified by mistake since they were among the policemen who responded to the crime scene.

Both policemen and fellow SWAT members were having a Christmas party on the 3rd floor of Arviel Travel Agency on Libertad Street when they heard a gunshot at about 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 21, Biswilan said.

He said he and his men immediately went downstairs and saw Provido's bloodied body near the corner of Cuenca and Libertad streets.

Batula and PO3 Salvador Memije took a motorcycle and ran after the supposed assailants as he and other SWAT members brought the victim to the Pasay General Hospital, Biswilan said. Minutes later, Batula and Memije returned to the crime scene, unable to arrest the supposed gunmen, Biswilan said.

"This is the truth. I don't know where the supposed witnesses got their story. I was there and I saw everything," he said.

2 cops relieved for alleged extortion

By Nelson Flores

EASTERN Police District Office director Senior Supt. Rolando Sacramento yesterday ordered the relief of two policemen who were reported to be involved in an extortion incident early this month.

PO3 Geminic Tingne and PO3 Taciano Dagami, both members of the EPDO Criminal Investigation Division, would be subjected to summary dismissal proceedings and immediate criminal prosecution once the allegations against them have been proven, Sacramento said.

Tingne and Dagani denied the allegation. But their alleged victim, truck driver Felix Paor, identified them as the policemen who allegedly confiscated 42 sacks of flour from the truck he was driving after his employer failed to pay them P15,000 in grease money in a police line-up in Sacramento's office last week, Sacramento said.

He said Paor and his employer Alredo Guido filed a complaint against Tingne and Dagami two weeks ago. In his complaint, Paor said he was driving his truck along Shaw Boulevard on the night of Dec. 18 when a gray Toyota Corolla car and a jeep blocked his path. He said the suspects and three other unidentified men arrested him and brought him to the EPDO-CID office on Meralco Avenue in Pasig City after he failed to show the proper documentation for his cargo.

Paor said that the suspects took his cellular phone and the P15,000 cash in his wallet without any explanation. He said the policemen then ordered him to contact Guido. He said the policemen then demanded P15,000 from Guido in exchange for the release of the cargo. When he failed to come up with the amount, Paor said they went to a local flour manufacturer in Mandaluyong where they sold the 42 sacks of flour the policemen allegedly took from the truck to a certain Bensoy.

When Guido learned of the incident, he immediately filed a complaint against the suspects, prompting Sacramento to investigate.

Homicide raps . . .

(From page A15)

Charges of reckless imprudence resulting in double homicide, multiple physical injuries and damage to property were filed against Tagle, after Annalyn Bello, 23, a housemaid of 8 Ipil Place in Forbes Park, Makati City; and Elvy Siega, 38, also a housemaid of 38 Nathan St., White Plains, Quezon City were killed when he allegedly sideswiped them accidentally with his BMW, police said.

Also injured in the accident were four of the maids' companions, identified as Jennylyn Lotilla, 19, a housemaid of 8 Ipil Place, Forbes Park, Makati; Mefa Marie Radoc, 24, of Little Baguio, Taytay, Rizal; Edwin Badon, 30; and Virgie Foster, 31, housemaid of Park Place Tower, the Fort, Global City, Taguig, police said.

Tagle was driving his blue BMW with plate number WJG-967 along McKinley Road near Forbes Park at about 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 26 when he hit the concrete base of a lamppost. He lost control after the impact and veered his vehicle toward the left, crossing over to the opposite lane, police said. The left side of his car then rammed into the concrete wall of the Manila Golf Club.

Unfortunately, the car also hit the victims who were waiting for a jeepney ride by the roadside.

The victims were rushed to the Makati Medical Center, but Bello and Siega died about two hours later from traumatic injuries they suffered. The others have been released from the hospital since then, police said.

Investigators from the Makati City traffic police said Tagle was travelling very fast when the accident happened. They said the road was also curving and Tagle could have lost control of his vehicle.

The Makati City traffic police have impounded Tagle's BMW until the case is resolved.

1 killed as 'baby rocket' . . .

(From page A15)

Arson investigators said they are still trying to determine the cause of the blaze although a number of local residents said a liquefied petroleum gas tank exploded before the fire started. They told investigators they heard an explosion before the blaze broke out.

Investigators said that low water pressure and the presence of onlookers made it very difficult for firemen to fight the fire. But local barangay officials and police secured the area from looters, authorities said.

Cainta Mayor Nicanor Felix ordered an investigation of the fire and directed the local social welfare and service department to immediately render assistance to the fire victims. *With a report from Nelson Forte Flores*

Australian tourist robbed

By Philip C. Tubeza

A SUSPECTED thief, whose modus operandi involves posing as a vice-president of Citibank, struck again.

This time, he robbed an Australian tourist in Intramuros, Manila, three weeks after he robbed an Indian tourist also in Intramuros.

Robert John Freilich, 56, currently billeted at Room 824 at the Manila Hotel, said two unidentified men robbed him while he was sightseeing inside Intramuros, said investigator SP03 Cecilo T. Sacorum, of the Western Police District-General Assignment Section.

Police said the suspects took Freilich's Panasonic DS28 Camcorder, 40 Australian dollars, P1,200 in cash, and a pair of prescription glasses.

Freilich described the man who introduced himself as a bank executive and even gave him a calling card as aged 50-years-old, about 5'7" tall and fair complexioned. He said the man had an accomplice, who acted as his driver.

Police said Freilich was taking video shots when the suspects approached him between 2:30 and 3 p.m. on Dec. 29 at Intramuros near the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

Freilich told police the "sweet-talking" robber introduced himself as a Citibank vice-president and gave him a calling card, with "Robert Simborelli" printed on it. He said the suspect offered him a ride to Manila Hotel where the suspect said he was meeting his daughter for coffee. He said the suspect's "flowery speech" convinced him to board the suspect's car where an accomplice waited.

Police said the suspects then offered Freilich a pack of pineapple juice, which was apparently laced with a sleep-inducing drug.

After finishing the drink, Freilich said he became dizzy and passed out.

Freilich said he woke up and found himself in San Pedro, Laguna and his valuables gone. He said barangay officials found him unconscious by the roadside in San Pedro, brought him to a clinic and later contacted his wife in Manila.

Freilich became the second tourist to fall victim to the Ativan gang in Intramuros this month.

On Dec. 8, Indian tourist and businessman Yogesh Marhawa, 36, lost nearly P200,000 to an alleged Ativan gang member who also pretended to be a CitiBank vice-president.

The suspects took his P120,000 laptop, a P23,000 gold ring, a P13,000 gold necklace, clothes worth P5,000; a P4,000 Canon camera and spectacles worth P3,000, police said.

They also got the victim's credit card, which could only be used in India and Nepal, and P14,000 and $200 in cash. They left the victim unconscious in Bulacan.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, January 1, 2002
Mary, Mother of God

1st Reading:	**Num 6:22-27**
2nd Reading:	**Gal 4:4-7**
Gospel:	**Lk 2:16-21**

The Shepherds came hurriedly and found Mary and Joseph with the baby lying in the manger. On seeing this they related what they had been told about the child, and all were astonished on hearing the shepherds.

As for Mary, she treasured all these messages and continually pondered over them.

The shepherds then returned giving glory and praise to God for all they had heard and seen, just as the angels had told them.

On the eighth day the circumcision of the baby had to be performed; he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

Commentary

Our year opens with the mother of God, she who gives birth to Jesus that Jesus might be born in us. The mission of Jesus is to draw us into his own relationship with the God he loved to call Father. As we begin our year, Mary teaches us how to pray as she did, to ponder in our minds and treasure in our hearts Jesus, as revealed in the gospel narratives. Today we are taught by the shepherds. God announced to them the good news of great joy for all the people – the Savior-Messiah is born. Mary is our companion as we contemplate Jesus, born for our joy. We ask her to help us to know Jesus more clearly, to love him more dearly and follow him more nearly in prayer and active service of our neighbor.

*Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., U.P. Village, Diliman, Quezon City, U.P. P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429 E-mail: claret@cnl.net Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications) & **http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)***

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

JUDICIAL ETHICS—Role of the sheriff—Sheriffs play an important role in the administration of justice. They are tasked to execute final judgments of the courts. If not enforced, such decisions become empty victories of the prevailing parties. As agents of the law, sheriffs are called upon to discharge their duties with due care and utmost diligence because in serving the court's writs and processes and implementing its order, they cannot afford to err without affecting the integrity of their office and the efficient administration of justice. In the case at bar, the classic line "justice delayed is justice denied" finds relevance. The decision of the municipal trial court has become final. It was imperative to execute it. Respondent-sheriff's failure to execute it for 4 years constitutes gross neglect of duty. The conduct and behavior of everyone connected with an office charged with the dispensation of justice, from the presiding judge to the lowest clerk, should be circumscribed with the heavy burden of responsibility. His conduct, at all times, must not only be characterized by propriety and decorum but above all else must be above suspicion. [Citations omitted.] [*Per Curiam, En Banc,* Mendoza v. Tuquero, A.M. No. P-99-1343, June 28, 2001]

Digest by R.B. Vera

Rage is back with a new dream

By Leah Salterio

IT'S AS if they never left the local entertainment scene because their name brings instant recall, especially to the '80s generation. When show bands and jazz were the trend in the local music scene, Rage dauntlessly brought pop-rock music to the fore and became a huge hit.

Today, when you mention Rage Band, it brings back memories of the energetic concert scene of the '80s, highlighted by their larger-than-life performances.

But Rage chose to make an important decision in their stellar singing career. In 1988, they staged their farewell concert, "Hollywood or Bust" at the now-defunct Rizal Theater. The group was driven at that time to pursue their dream of going international.

"Rage was formed specifically for our goal of making it big in America," says vocalist Marissa Buñag. "At that time, Atek Jacinto looked for members and trained them for performances abroad."

The band toured Asia and performed in such countries as Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Korea.

"Then Atek felt we were ready for the US," Marissa says. "He tried to get our resources together, but sadly the plan didn't work out."

Instead of pursuing their American dream, Rage disbanded. Marissa opted to stay in the US where she worked as manager for a PR outfit.

Juan Miguel, meanwhile, returned to the country and worked as jingle-maker.

Never lost touch

After more than a decade, however, Marissa and Juan Miguel, who never lost touch with each other even if they were thousands of miles apart, believed now is the best time to revive the band and unleash Rage anew.

Juan Miguel convinced Marissa to return to Manila. But first, she had to shed off those post-natal pounds.

"I had low self-esteem when I arrived here," Marrisa shares. "After giving birth, I became as big as 184 pounds, but I guess when you're determined to do something, it's always possible. I lost 30 pounds in two months."

While she says she still has to lose a little more weight, Marissa is ready to take centerstage again. Rage is reborn with new members Tonet Lipana, Qnie Alcantara, Bonggoy Garcia, Biv de Vera, Derick Ileto and Raymond Leong joining her and Juan Miguel.

"At first, we just wanted it to be an outlet because we missed performing," she says. "But it has become a career again."

Today, Rage does regular gigs at Strumm's Jupiter, Hard Rock, Ratsky's Malate and Dish at Rockwell's Power Plant Mall. (For bookings, call 0917-898ROCK or 410-7468)

At Strumm's, Mitch Valdes watched the band and confessed, "I'm a reborn fan!"

"Now is the right time to revive the band," Juan Miguel maintains. "We're paying our dues again after a long hiatus. We know we can't rest on our laurels. It just helps that the name had a lot of weight and a lot of people still remember us."

Marissa adds, "We're like the *bunso* among the bands now. We agreed to do *puesto* because that's the way to do it. We have to be exposed. We have to build a market and pull the crowd."

Realistic

Still, they remain realistic especially with the presence of more than a dozen bands in the local music scene today.

"We are ready if people don't come and watch us perform," Marissa says. "But thankfully, our shows have been well received."

It helped that Rage has an archive of songs which they simply dug up to prepare their repertoire.

"Our repertoire is not even updated," Juan Miguel says. "We just went back to singing the '80s tunes because the fashion and music of that generation are back. We felt that we have to address the market which had a void."

At 38, Juan Miguel unleashes an adrenaline-rising performance onstage and tirelessly croons pop-rock, New Wave and Billboard hits. And with his 80-minute dance medley, he can very well give other young band vocalists a run for their money.

This time, however, Rage has a different dream. No, they are not in a hurry to hold a major concert and fill up a huge venue like the Big Dome.

"Our dream is to record an album and be number one again," Juan Miguel says. "Before, 'Believe Me' was the most requested song for seven consecutive weeks on Kiss-FM, but we never got to record it.

"We approached all the major outfits but they turned us down. They said we were too Western. They wanted artistic license or full creative control to tell us what we should do. We didn't want to compromise or sacrifice our music."

With a new dream and a vision to be at the top again, Rage is ready to conquer the music scene anew.

But how do they react when someone tells them Rage is old?

"We're not," Marissa snaps back.

"Just watch us," Juan Miguel adds.

REVIVING the '80s sound. Rage Band lead vocalists Juan Miguel Salvador and Marissa Buñag (standing), with members Tonet Lipana, Qnie Alcantara, Bonggoy Garcia, Biv de Vera, Derick Ileto and Raymond Leong.

After breakup of her marriage, Gina Alajar feels totally free

By Remy M. Umerez

ONE can easily spot major changes in former child actress Gina Alajar. The most noticeable is her slim figure. From 120 pounds, she slid to 105 and her waistline measures 26 inches.

Could this be the effect of her recent separation from Michael de Mesa, after 23 years of rocky marriage?

"Partly," she says. "I know this is the nth time we have parted ways. I recalled how in 1981, during my 'Diborsiyada' days, he said the words '*walang katulad si* Gina. She is one in a million.' And then we would reconcile. I've lost track on how many times these lines were delivered.

"When you are young, *malakas ang loob mong maghiwalay* because it marks a new beginning in your life. There are options to take and it was easy to let go. I tried to save my marriage and worked hard for it, and every time we're back into each others arms, I felt God heard my prayers," she reveals.

When Gina told her children about her decision, they reminded her to think about it very carefully.

"They asked me if it is the final separation or not. They even teased that we won't be original if after 16 years, Michael and I would reconcile once more like their parents Eddie Mesa and Rosemarie Gil."

But Gina stood firm with her decision which caused her pain and tears. Michael moved to a condo unit while their three sons remained with her.

Gina hopes to regain her self-esteem and self-respect with the decision she made.

"I finally accepted the truth that the situation is real. I used to entertain false hopes. Not anymore. I feel totally free."

Is she planning to seek an annulment of her marriage which famous show biz couples are quick to do?

"In our case, it is not that easy. It will be a long process because we have to analyze every single year that we were together. But the idea of having it annulled is at the back of my mind," she says.

She feels great sporting a new figure and again, a result of the endless running she did while filming the horror comedy flick, "Bahay ni Lola" for Regal Entertainment.

"When I saw how slim Manilyn Reynes is, I told myself I had to do something before people mistook me as her mother in 'Bahay ni Lola'," Gina says. "I hate operations so liposuction is out and besides, it is expensive. I might as well buy new things for the house with the amount.

"A friend recommended Marie France. Well, it is also expensive *pero* not painful. You have to be disciplined if you want good results. I also turned vegetarian. For breakfast, I eat fruits and drink only water."

Gina said doing horror movies always bring her luck. She won the best actress award for an *aswang* role in "Sa Piling ng Aswang."

"I also enjoy doing it because moviegoers remember my performance for a longer period, since horror has become a popular entry during the December filmfest."

"Bahay ni Lola," meanwhile, has turned out to be the biggest money-maker in this year's festival.

However, she opts not to direct a horror movie even if it means a sure hit at the box-office.

"I am more into drama focusing on a woman's misery or triumph," she says.

ALAJAR. Doing horror flicks brings her luck.

Shocking, amusing stories of 2001

DollyWood

Dolly Anne Carvajal

AS THE year comes to a close, let me recall some of the juiciest stories that Dollywood covered this year. Based on readers' feedback, here are the top stories that either shocked or amused them.

Thanks to all my unimpeachable sources for trusting me, to the stars involved for not letting the intrigues affect our friendship a bit and, of course, to my readers who never tire of Dollywooding.

Most of all, I'm grateful to God for always giving me inspiration especially when I suffer from writer's block due to emotional problems caused by the drama queen in me.

In no particular order, here are some of the most sensational Dollywood issues this year.

- Scoop on **Vandolph Quizon**'s love child **Gabrielle** with **Guia Avante**.
- The hush-hush romance of **Dingdong Dantes** and sportscaster **Chinna Jocson**.
- **Michael de Mesa**'s first full length interview about his final split-up with **Gina Alajar**.
- Translation of the French hit song "On Ne S'aimera Plus Jamais."
- **Vic Sotto**'s new, non-show biz girlfriend **Marla**.
- The alleged live-in arrangement of **Paolo Bediones** and **Maxine** (which Paolo later denied, although my source insists it's true).
- **Janice de Belen**'s filing for an annulment of her marriage with **John Estrada**.
- The tryst of John Estrada and **Vanessa del Bianco** in Cebu.
- The other side of **Korina Sanchez**.
- **Boy Abunda**'s Most Interesting People TV special on ABS-CBN (I was the head writer).
- **Jessica Rodriguez**'s admission that she was photographed in the nude during her bridal shower and the photo circulated on the Internet. Curious readers wanted to know where exactly they could locate the controversial photo.
- **Ryan Agoncillo**'s split-up and reconciliation with his Filipino Chinese girlfriend.
- **Tin-Tin Bersola** and **Julius Babao**'s 2003 wedding date.
- **Patty Betita**'s reaction to the downfall of the Estradas (she has a love child, **Emilio**, with **JV Ejercito**).

For feedback, e-mail wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

CHRISTMAS PARTY CAPS FRUITFUL YEAR

The Backroom family recently celebrated its annual Christmas party to formally cap a fruitful year that has passed and bring cheers to the New Year. The event was attended by Backroom's managing director Boy Abunda and vice president Bong Quintana (left), with production manager Bettina Aspillaga. The company's PR group is composed of (right) Mary Ann Sta. Ana, Almed Garcia, Jet Valle, Irene de Leon, Cynthia Espiritu and Luis Cardona. The talents division if composed of Rowena Salido, Sandra Santos, Jonathan Valdez, Ryan Brusola, Lourdes Geronimo, Annalyn Maghirang, Jamie Almario, Lance Sarmiento, Judy Santos, Lisa Matias, Nor Geronimo, Philip Roxas, Agnes Agay and Amar Cerbito. Also in attendance were some of the Backroom artists like The Company, Janna Victoria, Shannen Torres, Gladys and the Boxers with K and Calvin Millado who hosted the event.

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according to Associate Justice Raoul V. Victorino of the Sandiganbayan, chairman of the Golden Jubilarian

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2	BAHAY NI LOLA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	YAMASHITA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	HINDI KITA MA-REACH	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	SUSMARYOSEPI 4 FATHERS	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	YAMASHITA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	BAHAY NI LOLA THX	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	TATARIN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	HUBOG	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	HINDI KITA MA-REACH	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	BAGONG BUWAN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

Art Film

GREENBELT

1	TATARIN	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	BAHAY NI LOLA	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	YAMASHITA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	REGINE AT THE MOVIES DEC. 28, 29, 30 Onstage	

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	SUSMARYOSEPI 4 FATHERS THX	In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	BAGONG BUWAN	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	TATARIN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	HINDI KITA MA-REACH	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	HUBOG	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	BAGONG BUWAN
2 (SDDS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	TATARIN
4 GOLD (DTS)	YAMASHITA
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
6 GOLD (SDDS)	HUBOG
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	BAGONG BUWAN
8	YAMASHITA
9	BAHAY NI LOLA
10	HUBOG

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	YAMASHITA
2	TATARIN
3 (DTS)	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	4 FATHERS
6 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	TATARIN
2	YAMASHITA
3	BAGONG BUWAN

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	4 FATHERS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BAGONG BUWAN
5	TATARIN

METROPOLIS star
543.3927 loc. 150

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	YAMASHITA
4	TATARIN
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	4 FATHERS
7	
8	

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2011 to 13

1	BAHAY NI LOLA

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	YAMASHITA
2	MONSTERS

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	TATARIN
2	RESERVE
3	BAHAY NI LOLA

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
A	HUBOG

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	HUBOG
2	YAMASHITA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	BAHAY NI LOLA

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	TATARIN
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	
7 (DTS)	
8 (SDDS)	HUBOG
9 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	BAGONG BUWAN

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA
4 (SDDS)	HUBOG
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
7 (DTS)	TATARIN
8	4 FATHERS
9	DI KITA MA-REACH

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	YAMASHITA
4	TATARIN
5 (SDDS)	BAGONG BUWAN
6	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
7 (DOLBY)	4 FATHERS
8	BAHAY NI LOLA

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	TATARIN
4	YAMASHITA
5 (SDDS)	HUBOG

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	YAMASHITA

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	BAHAY NI LOLA

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	TATARIN
Lords	TATARIN
Jennet	HUBOG

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	TATARIN
3	YAMASHITA

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	TATARIN

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	YAMASHITA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	TATARIN

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
2	YAMASHITA
3	TATARIN
4	CLOSED
5	CLOSED
6	HUBOG

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	TATARIN
2	HUBOG
3	BAGONG BUWAN

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	YAMASHITA

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	TATARIN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	YAMASHITA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
4	TATARIN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
3 (DTS)	TATARIN
4	BAGONG BUWAN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	HUBOG
2	TATARIN
3 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
4 (DTS)	YAMASHITA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
2	TATARIN
3	YAMASHITA
4 (DTS)	BAGONG BUWAN

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	TATARIN
4	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
5	BAGONG BUWAN

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	TATARIN

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	YAMASHITA
3	BAGONG BUWAN

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	TATARIN
3	HINDI KITA MA-REACH

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4008

1 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
2 (DTS)	TATARIN

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	HUBOG
2	HINDI KITA MA-REACH
3	BAHAY NI LOLA

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	TATARIN

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	YAMASHITA
4 (DTS ES)	TATARIN

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2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	HUBOG
5	TATARIN
6	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
7	DI KA MAREACH
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	HUBOG
10	DI KA MAREACH

THX

ERMITA 536-7809 TO 12

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	DI KA MAREACH
5	TATARIN
6	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
7	HUBOG

METRO EAST 632-9115-16 / 633-7641

1	HUBOG
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	DI KA MAREACH
4	YAMASHITA
5	TATARIN
6	BAGONG BUWAN
7	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
8	BAHAY NI LOLA

NOVALICHES 936-3229 TO 31

1	HUBOG
2	TATARIN
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	DI KA MAREACH
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
7	YAMASHITA
8	BAGONG BUWAN

IMUS (046) 471-6199

1	DI KA MAREACH
2	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
3	TATARIN
4	HUBOG
5	YAMASHITA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 / 0459

1	YAMASHITA
2	HUBOG
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	ROCKSTAR
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MUSKETEER

ILOILO (033) 336- 9077 / 9079

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	YAMASHITA
3	HUBOG
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	TATARIN
6	ROCKSTAR

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SUTLA (RE-ISSUE)
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	MUSKETEER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	EARTHQUAKE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	MVP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	SUMMER CATCH
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	PISNGI
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	DALAWA SI EBA / HIYAS SA PARAISO
ODEON	BAGONG BUWAN
ODEON-2	YAMASHITA
ROBEN	HUBOG
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	PUKYUTAN / STORY OF US

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	HUBOG
REMAR	BAGONG BUWAN
REMAR-2	YAMASHITA

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	YAMASHITA
B	BAHAY NI LOLA
C	HUBOG

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-2	THE MUSKETEER

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-2	HUBOG
CINEMA-3	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DI KITA MA-REACH
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TATARIN
CINEMA-6	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-7	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-8	HUBOG
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-12	TATARIN
CINEMA-14	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-15	FOUR FATHERS

LORES

CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED

POWER PLANT CINEMA

CINEMA-1	HUBOG
CINEMA-2	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-3	TATARIN
CINEMA-4	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-5	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-6	BAGONG BUWAN

UNIWIDE METROMALL

(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	
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CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
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7	4 FATHERS
8	HUBOG

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1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	TATARIN
3	YAMASHITA
4	HUBOG
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	4 FATHERS
7	BAGONG BUWAN
8	DI KITA MA-REACH
9	YAMASHITA
10	BAHAY NI LOLA

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1	YAMASHITA
2	DI KITA MA-REACH
3	TATARIN
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	HUBOG
8	YAMASHITA
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	TATARIN
11	BAGONG BUWAN
12	4 FATHERS

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	TATARIN
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	HUBOG
7	TATARIN
8	DI KITA MA-REACH
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	BAHAY NI LOLA
11	4 FATHERS
12	YAMASHITA

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	TATARIN
2	4 FATHERS
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	YAMASHITA
5	DI KITA MA-REACH
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	YAMASHITA
8	BAHAY NI LOLA
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	BAHAY NI LOLA
11	TATARIN
12	HUBOG

SM TUTUBAN
2514302

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	YAMASHITA
4	4 FATHERS

DIGITAL dts SOUND DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	YAMASHITA
5	TATARIN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	4 FATHERS
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	YAMASHITA
10	BAHAY NI LOLA
11	DI KITA MA-REACH
12	BAGONG BUWAN

SM SOUTHMALL
8066088 • 8066782

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	DI KITA MA-REACH
3	YAMASHITA
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	4 FATHERS
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	TATARIN
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	YAMASHITA
10	HUBOG

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L
8820905

1	HUBOG
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA

SM CEBU
2313876

1	HARRY POTTER
2	MUSKETEER
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	ROCKSTAR
6	HUBOG
7	TATARIN

SM ILOILO
3209422

1	HUBOG
2	CLOSED
3	HARRY POTTER
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	CLOSED
8	TATARIN

SM PAMPANGA
7128015

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	TATARIN
3	YAMASHITA
4	4 FATHERS
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM SUCAT
8294075

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	TATARIN
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	YAMASHITA

SM DAVAO

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	HUBOG
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	TATARIN
6	MUSKETEER

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

Boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LET'S greet the New Year with a big smile—hopefully, thanks in part to these boob-tube booboos:

Host: *Ang ganda ng* Christmas special *natin*! What's next for our viewers on this special day?

Cohost: *Ano pa? E di* another number from this beautiful choir *na kumakanta ng kanilang mga* infamous *na* jingles!

(Infamous? Jingles? Thank you, *ha*?)

***

Host: Now that the year is about to end, we want to repeat our commitment to you, our dear viewers.

Cohost: Yes, we promise *na lalo* naming *pagbubutihin ang aming* show, *habang lumalaki ang aming mga* viewers—kayo 'yon!

(Ok, *pero hindi kami lumalaki—dumadami, puwede pa*—But not if you keep making mistakes like this.)

***

Host: What movie will you see in the Metro Manila Film Festival?

Guest: One of them is the one directed by **Marilou Diaz-Abaya**, one of the country's most respectable movie directors!

(Respectable? Oh, you mean respected—there is a difference, you know . . .)

***

Host: How does your organization plan to raise funds for your Christmas projects?

Guest: One of our plans is to put up a charitable fashion show with creations by our top designers!

(Charitable fashion show? *Isa ka pa*!)

***

Host: How do you feel about the poor showing of your business this year?

Guest: Well, it's hurtening, but we have to accept reality.

(Hurtening? Oooh, that really hurts!)

***

Host: In a few months' time, many students will graduate from college. What do you think is in store for them?

Guest fortune teller: After graduation, of course they land for a nice job!

(Duh!)

***

Host: Our annual Christmas gift giving is something all of us on this show really look forward to!

Cohost: Yes, there's nothing so fulfilling than sharing with the less unfortunate!

("The less unfortunate?" What in the world do you mean?!)

Chat attack

LINK TV, the country's first interactive TV channel, has built up a substantial television chat "community." To join, all you need is your cellphone and cable TV. As soon as you text in your first message, the friendly "Admin" welcomes you to the chat channel. Then all sorts of topics fly, ``from humble introductions to declarations of love."

Link chat TV frees users from the hassles of traditional Internet chatting. The channel also has other components—information, trivia, updates and a wide assortment of music videos. To register, send the word register to 20301 (Smart and Talk n Text).

It also has options for you to join the poll, change your nickname, or send in your comments an suggestions.

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

HUBOG - R 18 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	BAHAY NI LOLA - GP 12:20, 2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00	TATARIN - R 18 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 9:30
YAMASHITA - GP 12:25, 2:45, 5:05, 7:25, 9:45	BAGONG BUWAN - P 13 12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30	BAGONG BUWAN - P 13 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

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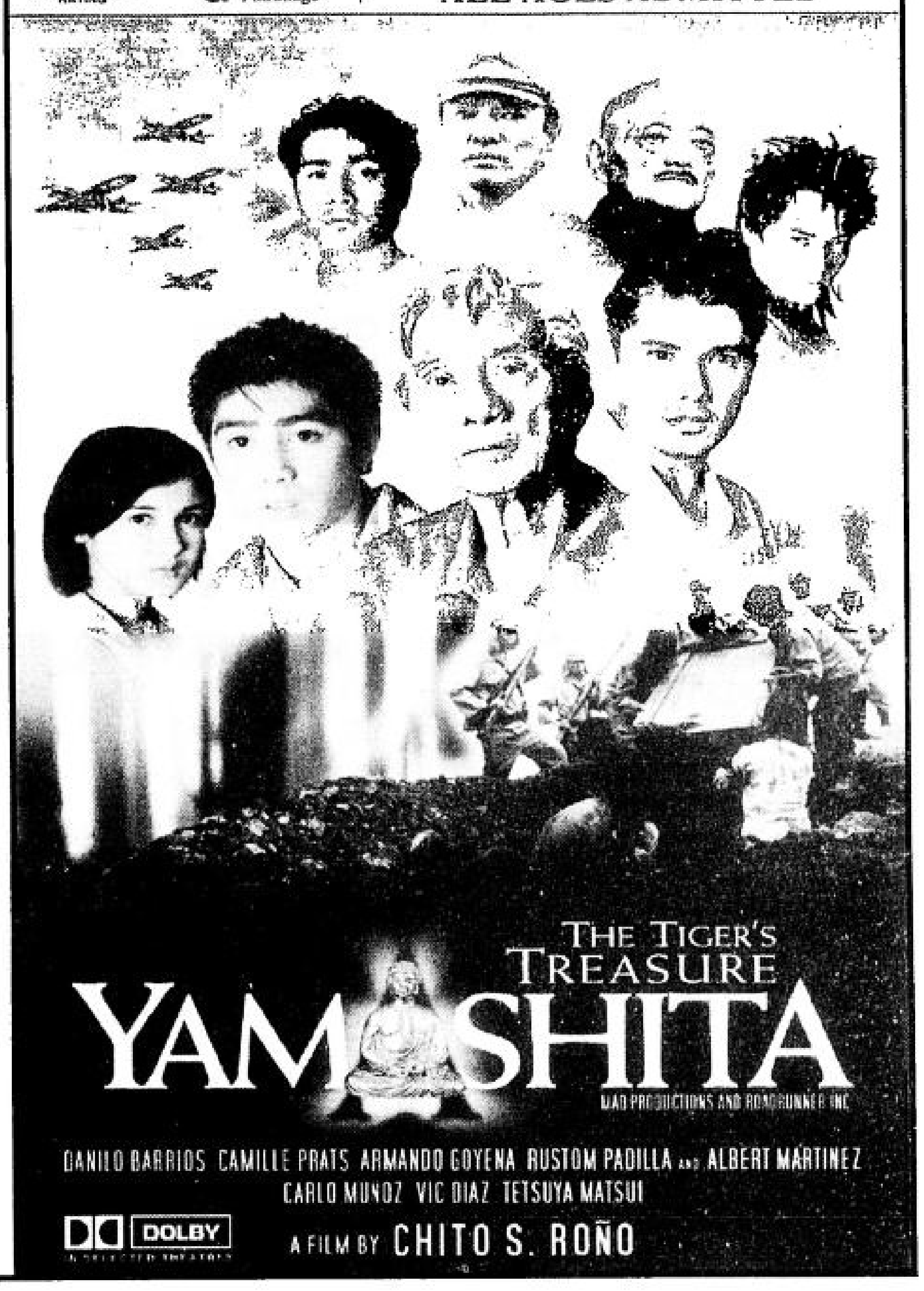
- BEST SCREENPLAY - ROY IGLESIAS
- BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY - NEIL DAZA
- BEST STORY - ROSELLE MONTEVERDE & ROY IGLESIAS
- BEST PRODUCTION DESIGNER - FERNAN SANTIAGO & MAYPAGLINAWAN
- BEST MAKE-UP - WARREN MUNAR
- BEST VISUAL EFFECTS-ROAD RUNNER
- BEST SOUND - MICHAEL IDIOMA I BEST FLOAT

OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2001

MTRCB RATING G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED



THE TIGER'S TREASURE
YAMASHITA
MAD PRODUCTIONS AND ROADRUNNER INC
DANILO BARRIOS CAMILLE PRATS ARMANDO GOYENA RUSTOM PADILLA AND ALBERT MARTINEZ
CARLO MUNOZ VIC DIAZ TETSUYA MATSUI
DOLBY
A FILM BY CHITO S. ROÑO

OPENS FRIDAY, JAN. 4, 2002
MTRCB RATING G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED

MANHATTAN ASIA FILMS, INC.
Joko Diaz
Bobby Andrews
Sunshine Dizon
Joanna Gonzales
and
Shaina Magdayao
"Mga Batang Lansangan... Ngayon"
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
BLEAU AQUINO and RYDER AQUINO
WRITTEN and DIRECTED BY
JOSE N. CARREON

Moby Mister Donut Robert Brown's Wear PCSO
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SKIN CARE & PERMANENT COSMETICS CORPORATION
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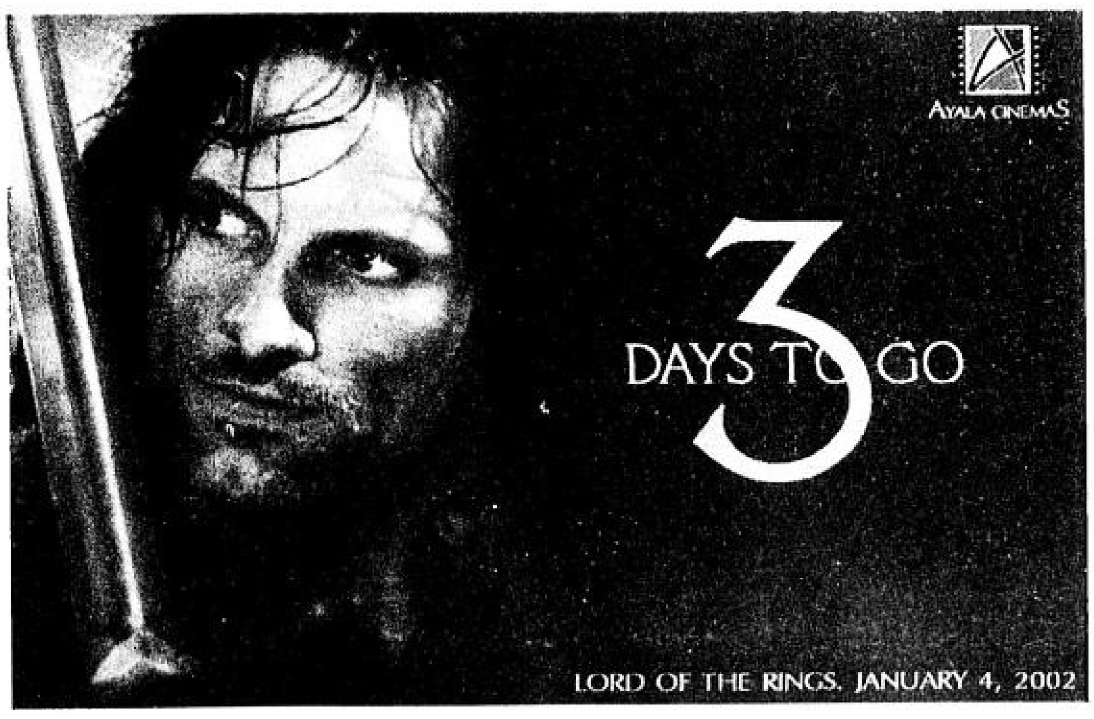


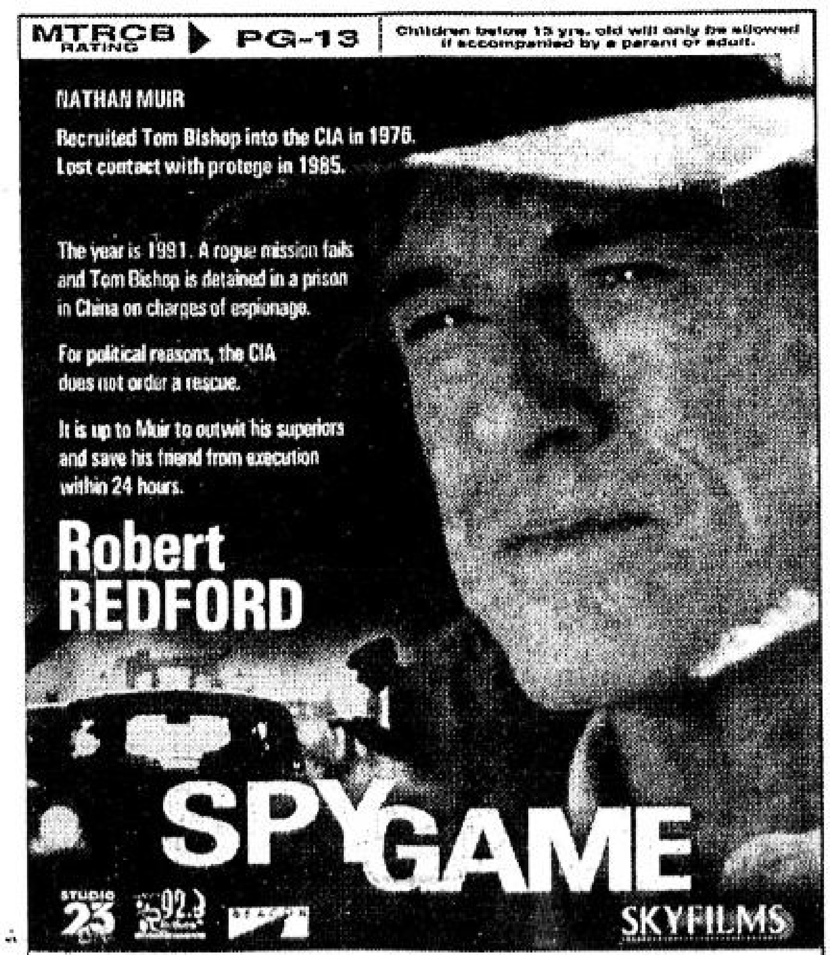
AYALA CINEMAS
3 DAYS TO GO
LORD OF THE RINGS. JANUARY 4, 2002

MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

TOM "Boy Scout" BISHOP
Recruited into the CIA by Nathan Muir in 1976. Missing in action since 1985.
The year is 1991. A rogue mission fails and Tom Bishop is detained in a prison in China on charges of espionage.
For political reasons, the CIA does not order a rescue.
It is up to Muir to outwit his superiors and save his friend from execution within 24 hours.
Brad PITT
SPY GAME
STUDIO 23
SKYFILMS

OPENS JANUARY 9

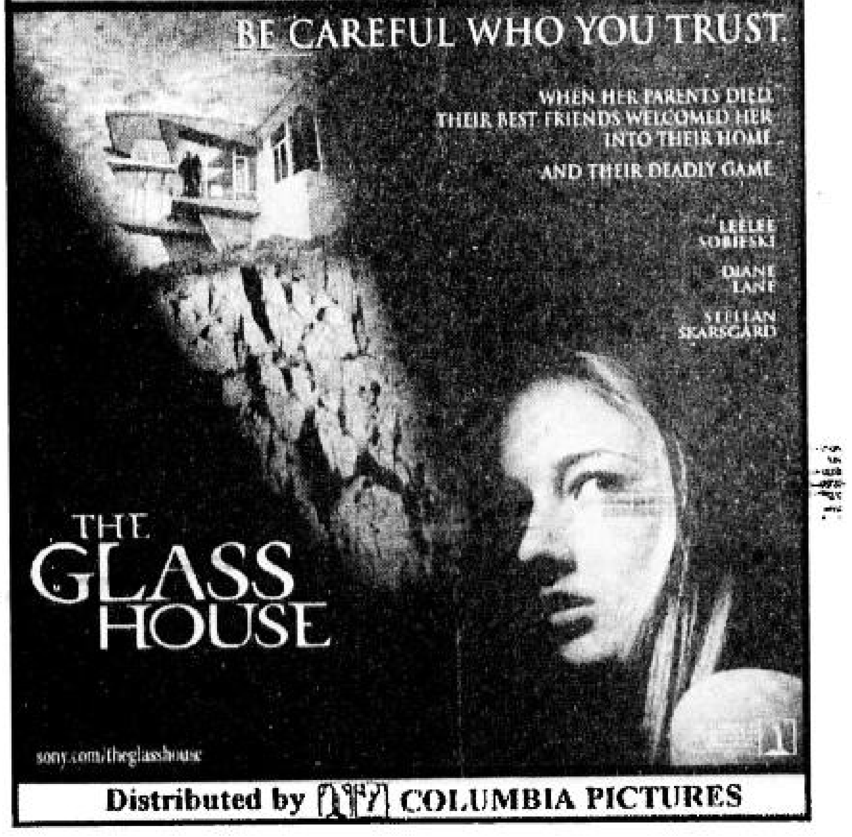
MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.



NATHAN MUIR
Recruited Tom Bishop into the CIA in 1976. Lost contact with protege in 1985.
The year is 1991. A rogue mission fails and Tom Bishop is detained in a prison in China on charges of espionage.
For political reasons, the CIA does not order a rescue.
It is up to Muir to outwit his superiors and save his friend from execution within 24 hours.
Robert REDFORD
SPY GAME
STUDIO 23
SKYFILMS

OPENS JANUARY 9

Special New Year Presentation!
HEART STOPPING TERROR BEGINS JAN.4 !
MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult



BE CAREFUL WHO YOU TRUST.
WHEN HER PARENTS DIED THEIR BEST FRIENDS WELCOMED HER INTO THEIR HOME...
AND THEIR DEADLY GAME.
LEELEE SOBIESKI
DIANE LANE
STELLAN SKARSGARD
THE GLASS HOUSE
sony.com/theglasshouse

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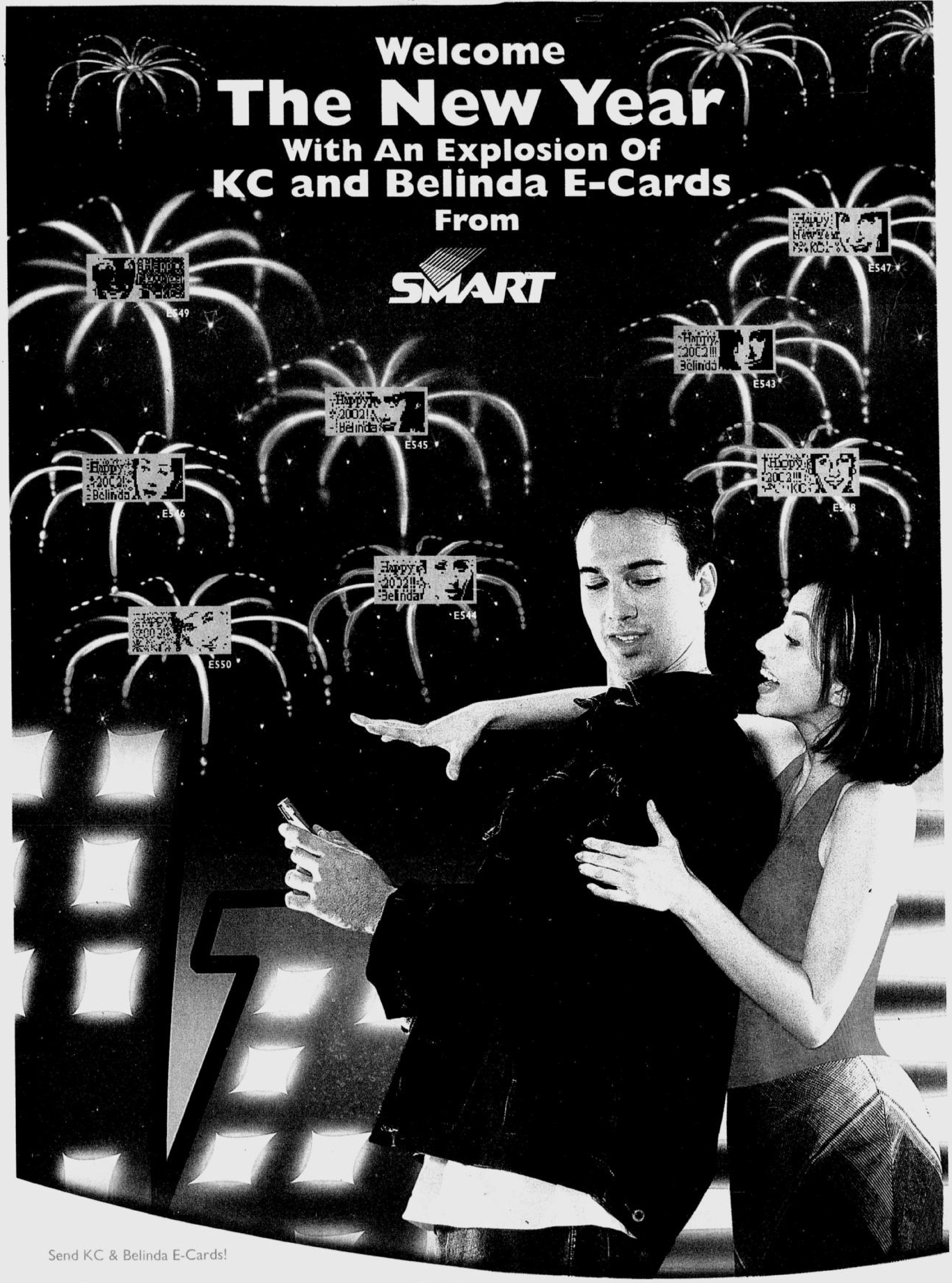
Welcome
The New Year
With An Explosion Of KC and Belinda E-Cards From
SMART



Happy New Year KC
E547
Happy 2002!!! KC
E549
Happy 2002!!! Belinda
E543
Happy 2002!! Belinda
E545
Happy 2002!!! Belinda
E546
Happy 2002!!! KC
E548
Happy 2002!!! Belinda
E544
Happy 2002!!
E550

Send KC & Belinda E-Cards!

To Choose A Celebrity:

`ECARDSEARCH CELEBRITY`

Key in ECARDSEARCH CELEBRITY and send to 240.

To Choose A Design:

`ECARDCODES BELINDA`

Key in ECARDCODES followed by the name of the celebrity and send to 240.

To Download An E-Card:

`ECARD E543`

Key in ECARD followed by the code number and send to 240.

To Send An E-Card:

`SENDECARD E543 09182442322`

Key in SENDECARD followed by the code and celfone number and send to 240.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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FINANCIAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT

SEC seeks OK of 3 priority measures

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission will push for the passage of three key economic bills to develop the country's financial markets.

SEC Chair Lilia R. Bautista said these bills were the proposed Corporate Recovery Act, the Securitization Bill and the Revised Company Act. These measures were endorsed to Congress as priority measures by the multi-sectoral Capital Market Development Council.

The Corporate Recovery Act proposed by Nueva Ecija Rep. Pacifico Fajardo is designed to fast-track the rehabilitation of distressed companies by providing clear guidelines to help them deal with their debt problems.

The Securitization bill was drawn up to provide a better tax treatment on asset-backed securities and other similar instruments. It is expected to help the government, banks and other financial institutions to gain wider access to liquidity.

The SEC also earlier endorsed certain amendments to the proposed Revised Investment Company Act which was aimed at jumpstarting the development of the mutual fund industry.

The Investment Companies Association of the Philippines expressed support to the new draft of the bill endorsed by the SEC, saying it would not only give the investing public adequate protection but it would also remove the barriers to the creation and management of mutual funds.

SEC documents showed that the Philippine mutual fund industry was the least developed in Asia with its net assets amounting to only $138 million, compared with the $1.19-billion net assets of Indonesia's mutual fund industry, the second least-developed in the world.

Among the main features of the SEC proposed RICA are: increased capitalization requirements, registration of investment advisers and exemption of investment companies from requirements under the Corporation Code to subscribe to at least 25 percent of any increase in authorized capital.

Bautista said that the SEC would also push for the passage of the Pre-Need Industry Code, which would serve as the basis for regulating pre-need companies.

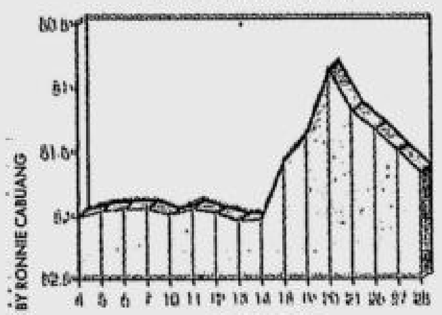
The passage of the code is expected to pave the way for the transfer of the regulatory functions over the pre-need companies from the SEC to the Insurance Commission.

The Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies has opposed the planned transfer on grounds that the insurance and pre-need companies are different.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY RONNIE CABUANG

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱51.665 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Dec. 28, 2001

¥131.46 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Dec. 28, 2001

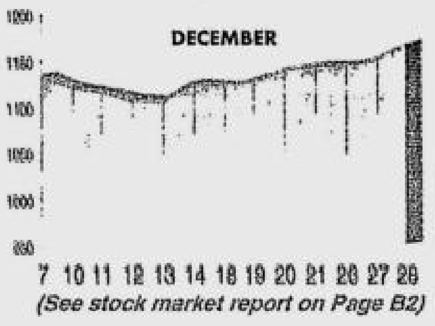
GOLD:$277.50/278.00
per ounce Hong Kong,
Dec. 28, 2001

Dec, 28, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.132375	1.000000	51.4040
Japan	Yen	0.008600	0.007595	0.3904
United Kingdom	Pound	1.645793	1.453400	74.7106
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.145228	0.128251	6.5926
Switzerland	Franc	0.674474	0.595628	30.6177
Canada	Dollar	0.709019	0.626135	32.1858
Singapore	Dollar	0.610939	0.539520	27.7335
Australia	Dollar	0.574226	0.507099	26.0669
Bahrain	Dinar	3.003806	2.652661	136.3574
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.301959	0.266660	13.7074
Brunei	Dollar	0.610939	0.539520	27.7335
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000109	0.000096	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.025596	0.022604	1.1619
UAE	Dirham	0.308381	0.272331	13.9989
Korea	Won	0.000858	0.000758	0.0390
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.883100	45.3949
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.451522	23.2100
France	Franc	0.152450	0.134628	6.9204
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.400733	20.5993
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.064177	3.2990
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.021891	1.1253
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000456	0.0234
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.148527	7.6349
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004405	0.2264
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005308	0.2729
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.021891	1.1253
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.121306	57.6396

STOCK MARKET

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares up

SHARES ended higher Friday, the last trading day of the year, as portfolio fund managers bid up prices before closing their books for 2001, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed up 15.22 points, or 1.3 percent at 1,168.08, adding to Thursday's 0.6-percent rise.

The market managed to end above its 1,150-point immediate support, though its overall performance for this year proved disappointing, with the main index registering a 22-percent decline from its 2000 closing level of 1,494.50.

Aiding the index rise was blue chip Globe Telecom, which rose P50, or 7.9 percent, at P680, boosted by several cross sales involving 1.29 million Globe Telecom shares.

Analysts said Friday's rally was expected. Some of them said it was unlikely the rally would extend up to next week when trading resumes after the holidays. The others were hopeful that the rally would be sustained.

Gainers led decliners 50 to 30 last Friday, while 37 issues were unchanged.

The Philippine peso, meanwhile, weakened against the dollar in a shortened trading, pressured by sustained losses in regional currencies led by the yen, traders said.

The peso closed at 51.665 to the dollar in the last trading day of 2001 on the Philippine Dealing System, from the previous day's 51.49 to $1. *AP*

Gov't to bid out wind power deal

PNOC Energy Development Corp. is planning to bid out in February the contract to develop the country's first commercial wind power facility, Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. said.

Perez, in a statement, said the state-owned company was planning to start the construction of the 40-megawatt wind farm in Burgos, Ilocos Norte, by the third quarter of 2002.

"If we start construction according to plan, the wind farm can start commercial operations by 2004," the secretary said.

PNOC-EDC is awaiting the approval of a financing package from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for the $64.7-million project.

The wind farm project also includes a 42-kilometer, 230-kilovolt transmission line from Burgos town to the National Power Corp. substation in Laoag City.

Perez said PNOC-EDC was planning to sell power from the wind farm to the main grid when the wholesale electricity spot market had been set up.

Fund lack derails NTC project

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission said it needed at least P2.1 billion to complete its network of monitoring equipment all over the country.

NTC chief Eliseo Rio Jr. said in an interview that the agency had asked Congress for a P255.6-million budget for 2002 so they could implement at least the Metro Manila and Luzon segments of their project. These segments, alone, would require around P150 million to P200 million.

But since the NTC was only given a P147.7-million allocation, it could not go ahead even with the first phase of the project, and would have to continue relying on the equipment of the industry players themselves to monitor their services.

Rio explained that NTC was really in dire need of equipment that would enable it to monitor the cellular phone firms' grade of services, rate of dropped calls, interconnection and use of frequencies.

By monitoring the companies' grade of service, the NTC would know whether or not they were engaged in oversubscription that result in dropped calls and busy signals.

BCDA putting up ₱7-B cyberpark in Fort Boni

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BASES Conversion and Development Authority has finalized its plan to put up a P7.2-billion Philippine Information Technology park on a 25.4-hectare property in Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Documents showed that the BCDA was planning to finance 15 percent or P1.08 billion of the total cost of the cyberpark project through internally generated funds. The balance will be financed by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation through a special yen loan package.

"The objective of the project is to establish a data center that will serve as an information gateway that will enable the Philippines to do high-speed, high-capacity global data transmission," the documents said.

A Philippine IT plaza as well as several IT offices will be built on the area that was originally intended for a golf course.

Based on the master plan, the IT plaza will have a total floor area of 20,080 square meters or 3.3 hectares, while the office lots will occupy 15.1 hectares. Another 7 hectares were earmarked for other developments.

The IT Plaza project is scheduled to be completed by September 2005.

The cost breakdown shows that P1.5 billion will go to the construction of the buildings, P1.04 billion to IT infrastructure and P1.14 billion to IT equipment procurement. Other expenses include e-government development program, management consulting services, international circuits lease cost and other administration and contingency costs.

The state-run IT park aims to encourage the growth and full development of information and communication technology in the country by stimulating investments in software and digital content development and incubating start-up ICT firms.

Unlike other IT parks projects, the BCDA's project will not venture into property development. It will, instead, provide low-cost incubation facilities for the government and the private sector.

The BCDA is a government-owned and -controlled corporation mandated by law to convert and develop former Philippine and US military bases into commercial and industrial hubs. It is also tasked to generate funds through the privatization of these assets estimated to be worth at least P78.7 billion.

BCDA is set to issue P2 billion worth of five-year bonds in May to raise additional funds for priority infrastructure projects and retire outstanding loans.

BSP expected to further ease monetary policies

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is inclined to ease further its monetary policies this year to help perk up the domestic economy in time for the expected recovery of the US economy by mid-year.

In a press briefing, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the steady drop in the country's inflation rate gave the BSP enough flexibility in its monetary management.

"The low inflation gives us room to either increase liquidity or lower interest rates," Buenaventura said.

The reserve requirement slapped on banks and the overnight rates are two of the BSP's most potent instruments in mopping up liquidity in the financial system. The institution tightens its grip on monetary supply when there is excess liquidity that may exert pressure on the exchange rate or the inflation rate.

Earlier, the BSP chief announced plans to bring down the level of the reserve requirement to "pre-crisis" levels in the first quarter of 2002.

The BSP recently slashed the reserve requirement by two percentage points to 16 percent.

Despite its leaning toward further reducing its overnight rates, the BSP last week decided to keep its overnight borrowing and lending rates unchanged at 7.75 and 10 percent, respectively.

Restructuring, downsizing no cure to recession woes, survey says

THE MOST common responses by companies to recessions—downsizing, freeze hiring and restructuring—do not lead to improved performance, according to a recent survey by consulting firm Watson Wyatt.

And yet the research reveals that 75 percent of the companies in selected Asian countries have already undertaken at least one of these tactics.

Watson Wyatt, in a statement, said this was consistent with the findings taken during the economic slowdown in the United States in the early 1990s and in Asia during the financial crisis of 1997 and 1998.

Watson Wyatt's study shows that adopting one or all of these actions do not always work. The research illustrates that restructuring in previous slowdowns resulted in poor goal achievement rates. Only 46 percent of US companies and 30 percent of Asian companies increased their profitability through the above restructuring measures.

In addition, only 32 percent of American firms and a mere 24 percent of Asian companies believe that they increased their competitive advantage as a result of these restructuring measures.

"Simply put, you cannot cut your way to greatness," explains Grahame Stott, Asia Pacific regional manager of Watson Wyatt Worldwide.

Restructuring of US & Asian companies shows low goal achievement rates

Goal Achievement Rate	USA	Asia
Reduce cost	61%	47%
Improve cash flow	49%	36%
Increase profitability	46%	30%
Increase ROI	42%	33%
Increase Competitive Advantage	32%	24%
Increase Customer Satisfaction	27%	33%
Reduce Inefficiencies	21%	46%

Is there a way out?

"First of all, adopting a head-in-the-sand attitude to business is a recipe for disaster, no matter how deep or shallow the recession is," says Stott. "The world is changing fast and keeping up with the pace of that change is key to succeeding in today's increasingly competitive business environment."

This is especially true in Asia as China's impending entry into the WTO promises more changes. Deregulation in many industries will enhance competition around the region and force the pace of the change to increase, regardless of the recession.

Companies striving to improve their performance should not shy away from this transformation, they should instead consider the short-term uncertainty, when competitors inevitably slow down, as an opportunity to gain competitive advantage.

Even if the competition also decides to move ahead aggressively, it will ensure that a company will not be left behind with little chance of catching up, but will be in a position of distinct advantage when the recession ends.

"By all means make sure you are cost efficient, but also make sure you go out there and look to acquire new assets that are key to your core strategy. Recessions are the perfect time to pick up bargains and gain competitive advantage," says Stott.

Factors found to breed success include: having clear business imperatives and carefully articulated objectives, effective employee communications and senior management visibility, increased automation, and humanized downsizing.

People are key

"The question of downsizing is particularly interesting. There are obvious public relations and employee morale issues with letting employees go. But what many do not factor in is its long term impact on the business," states JP Orbeta, Watson Wyatt's human capital group global practice leader.

"The way in which the employer conducts the redundancy program conveys a lot to the workers who remain. If not handled well, the fear, insecurity and lack of trust ultimately results in reduced workplace effectiveness," Orbeta says.

Watson Wyatt research also shows that fully 57 percent of companies in the United States and Hong Kong in past recessions rehired at least some of their downsized employees. Not surprisingly, management credibility suffered in the eyes of the remaining employees, which significantly reduced motivation.

Typically, the absolute number of people who are downsized is small relative to the overall employee population. Given the potential negative publicity and morale impact on an organization's downsizing plus how some companies stumble themselves through the way they downsize, there is scope for more effective downsizing strategies in terms of:

- Working out who should go rather than implementing across-the-board cuts
- Providing communications and support for leaves
- Crafting appropriate messages to the remaining workforce

"Without the support of your people, advancing is almost impossible," observes Orbeta.

The smart edge

So, what must companies do in tough times to gain an edge? Watson Wyatt suggests the SMART approach.

Strategy. Make sure your long-term strategy remains intact and focused, but be prepared to seize opportunities as conditions change, and test opportunities against achieving your strategy.

Message and measurement. It is vital that your key people understand the strategy and know where you are heading, particularly in tough and uncertain times. You cannot make quick and decisive change without their support, so ensuring that the whole organization receives a consistent message including the business rationale for actions taken is key to getting buy-in. And measure. Are you efficient today? Have you taken stock of how your organization is performing relative to key indicators, to your competitors, to other best practices?

Now is the best time to take a closer look at these and make decisions on how to manage performance and motivate key staff.

Acceleration. The world is changing quickly and you have to change even faster. In economic downturns, many companies slow down as revenues decline. This is an excellent time to gain market share and competitive advantage, to position your self for strong profitable growth as recovery begins.

To do this, change must happen quickly—even faster than in good times.

Reinvestment. Most companies look to cut costs and improve poor cash flow. However, by looking for opportunities and possibly acquisitions, it is possible to make significant leaps in achieving strategic goals in ways that were impossible in times of high economic growth.

Talent management. It is key to making it happen. An aligned and committed team of people within the organization together with a dedicated and flexible workforce can be your key competitive advantage, one that cannot be easily copied by competition.

Ensuring that your key people's interests are aligned with yours, and that they are well treated in these times (not necessarily the same thing as being the best paid) can be a significant advantage in making your strategy successful.

Being smart sounds straightforward but requires a lot of focus, drive and belief to succeed. However, while many business leaders understand the imperative nature of the actions they need to take, it can be much more difficult to align the management team and even harder to get the whole workforce charging in the right direction.

(Watson Wyatt is a global consulting company with 6,100 associates in 29 countries. Its corporate offices are in Reigate, England and Washington D.C. It provides consulting services in the areas of human capital management, human resources technologies, employee benefits and financial services management.)

Railway ridership to reach 1.7M passengers by 2005

BY ABIGAIL L. HO

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications said it expected railway ridership in Metro Manila to reach 1.7 million passengers a day when the Edsa Metro Rail Transit and Light Rail Transit loop is completed in 2005.

For this holiday season alone, hundreds of thousands of commuters had filled the two railway systems coaches to the brim up to its closing hours.

On Dec. 14, the Edsa MRT-3 posted its highest passenger load since it commenced operations in 1999. More than 390,000 passengers rode the MRT-3 that day, 40,000 passengers more than its average daily load.

"We will duplicate this feat in other areas where we are extending our services to, such as in Cavite and its surrounding areas. In time, more commuters will ride the railway systems we are building nationwide," DOTC Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez said in a statement last week.

The LRT is currently undergoing the construction of its line 2 that would run from Recto in Manila to Santolan in Pasig.

Phase 1 of the LRT-2 project, running from Santolan in Pasig to Cubao in Quezon City, is expected to be operational by April 2003. The rest of the line would start serving commuters by December 2004.

Once fully operational, the LRT 2 could accommodate up to 600,000 passengers a day, LRT Administration chief Teodoro Cruz Jr. said earlier.

The LRTA is also doing some improvements in the existing line 1 to augment its capacity, especially during peak hours.

MRT-3 is also set to start construction of its 5.1-kilometer extension that would link it to the LRT line 1 at the Monumento station.

The MRT-3 phase 2 project would entail the construction of three additional stations from North Avenue to Monumento.

Alvarez said construction of the MRT-3 extension project would start as soon as the National Economic and Development Authority-Investment Coordination Committee approves the final proposal for the project.

The Neda-ICC is currently evaluating the proposal of MRT-3 phase 1 builder Metro Rail Transit Corp. for the extension project. Alvarez said they expected a decision within this month.

The final leg of the loop would be the LRT-4 that would run from the Old Bilibid Prison in Manila to Quirino Highway in Novaliches.

After the completion of the metro railway loop as well as other railway systems in Panay and Mindanao, he said the DOTC would be working on rehabilitating the Philippine National Railways.

Rehabilitation efforts are set to start in 2006, beginning with the PNR's dilapidated tracks.

The PNR lines link northern and southern Luzon to Metro Manila.

Bayantel banks on Net service to stay afloat

BY ABIGAIL L. HO

DEBT-RIDDEN Bayan Telecommunications Inc. is banking on its new Internet-related service offerings to keep it afloat in the coming months as it continues to face escalating debt woes.

"We are positioning ourselves to garner a higher market share in the domestic data market where growth potential is high as corporations increasingly adopt Internet-related and managed data services," Bayantel chief consultant Tunde Fafunwa said.

Bayantel plans to increase its data business by 25 percent to 30 percent this year, higher than last year's growth rate of a little under 20 percent.

Fafunwa said Bayantel would increase its investment in the data business from P1 billion to P1.5 billion this year to bankroll growth.

"Almost all new capex (capital expenditures) will definitely be on the data side. All expansions and upgrades will be focused on data and Internet," he said.

The Lopez-owned firm launched in December a comprehensive range of access technologies that included Internet access; Web, e-mail and server hosting; Internet protocol transit and managed server.

Bayantel's Internet access services include leased lines, frame relays, digital subscriber lines and very small aperture terminals.

The telecommunications firm boasts of its flexibility in offering many value-added and advanced services because of its existing local exchange network and facilities.

Its high-speed, high-bandwidth, "always on" DSL service has speeds ranging from 128 kilobits per second (kbps) to 512 kbps.

This makes it ideal for applications such as videoconferencing, multimedia content, telecommuting and corporate virtual private network (VPN) solutions.

The company also has the "only alternative viable backbone versus PLDT (Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.)," according to Bayantel president and chief executive Eugenio Lopez III.

It recently signed a deal with power distributor Manila Electric Co. to market 300 kilometers of fiber-optic backbone.

"Combine that with the (2,762-kilometer) Bayantel backbone, we have the most extensive coverage of Metro Manila today," he said.

Bayantel recently offered 10 percent of the company to its creditors for a debt-to equity swap to help pay off its $477-million loan.

This took the place of its earlier proposal to have its creditor-banks condone 25 percent of its unsecured debts as well as write off interest payments beginning January.

Its creditor-banks include Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Land Bank of the Philippines, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Equitable PCI Bank Inc., United Coconut Planters Bank, Deutsche Bank AG, Standard Chartered Bank and JP Morgan Chase & Co.

Gov't asked to protect resin beyond 2003

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

THE GOVERNMENT has to provide tariff protection to local resin makers beyond 2003 to ensure sufficient local demand from mid-stream industries once a naphtha cracker is in operation, the Association of Petrochemical Manufacturers of the Philippines has said.

APMP chair Wilfredo Paras said the proposed naphtha cracker would go to waste if no local petrochemical company was in operation upon its completion in two to three years.

Paras said governments in other countries with developed petrochemical industries had also provided plastic makers sufficient tariff protection to build a firm foundation for growth.

Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the tariff protection on petrochemicals should stay to maintain a healthy mid-stream industry in time for the start of operation of the naphtha cracker.

The Department of Trade and Industry has lobbied to keep duties on polymers at 15 percent for the next five to 10 years within the Asean region.

Duties on polymers or base materials for plastic products are scheduled to go down to 5 percent by 2003, when duties on intra-Asean trade should be kept to no more than 5 percent under the Asean Free Trade Area.

Roxas stressed that the government's tariff protection for petrochemicals was hinged on the finalization of a development plan for a naphtha cracker.

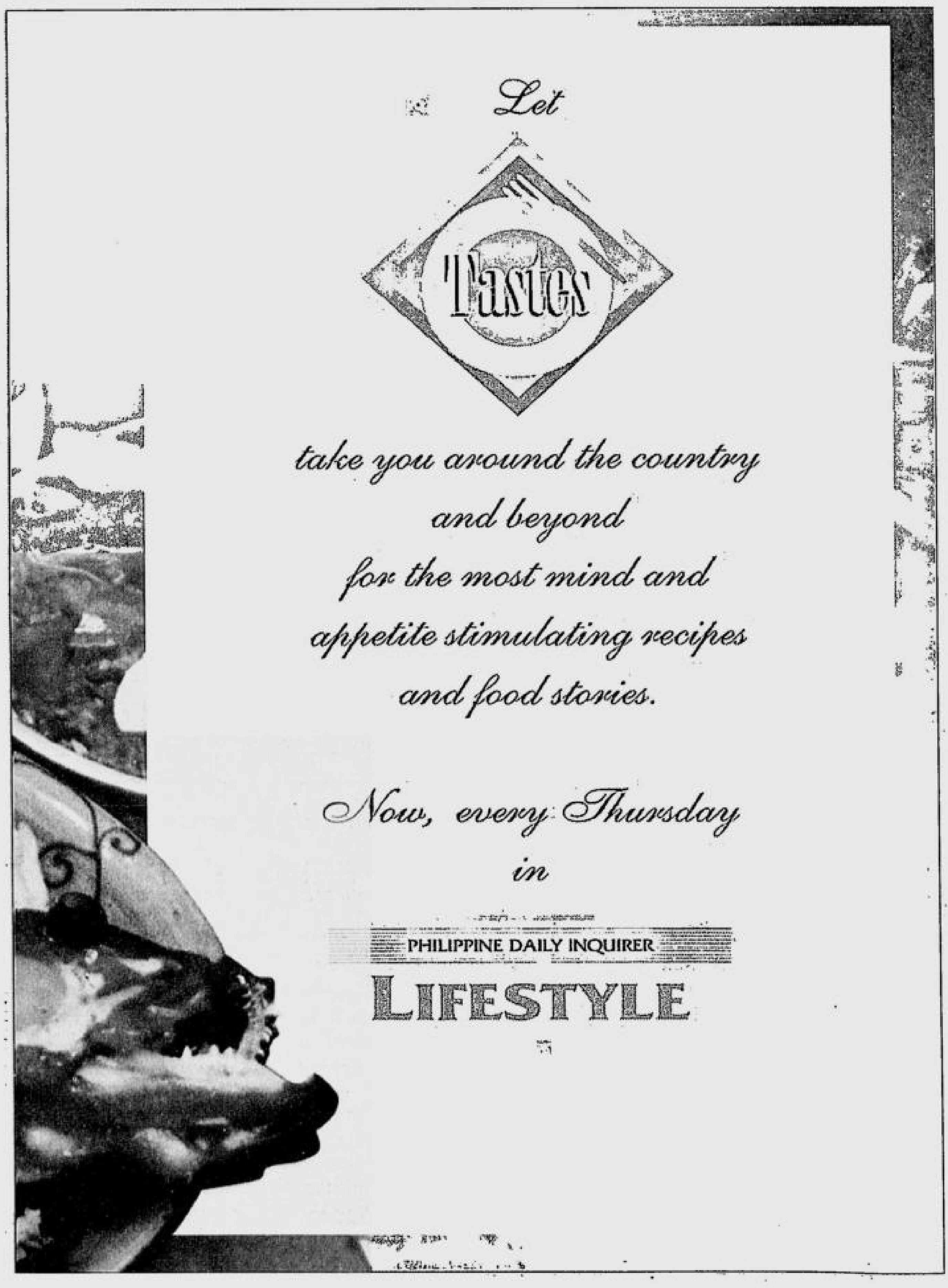
The Philippine National Oil Co.-Petrochemical Development Corp. is spearheading the construction of a $700-million naphtha cracker with an annual capacity of 350,000 to 500,000 metric tons, but no firm plan has yet been made.

Paras and Roxas were reacting to remarks made by Federation of Philippine Industries chair Raul Concepcion, who said it was unusual for the government to protect an industry when that industry was not yet in operation.

Concepcion said that "pre-operative" tariff would practically allow petrochemical firms to raise the money to bankroll the naphtha cracker at the expense of other industries that use plastic.

A naphtha cracker produces monomers used by petrochemical firms to produce polyethylene and polypropylene.

The development of a naphtha cracker in the Philippines, which has been on the drawing board since the late 1980s, is expected to integrate the plastic industry and reduce the country's dependence on imported raw materials for this widely used commodity.



MWSS to transfer projects

MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc. are set to take over P1.56 billion worth of projects from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

Maynilad and Manila Water will assume control of these projects using loans from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, Asian Development Bank and the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

MWSS documents show that the two water concessionaires will take over the Angat water supply optimization, Manila south water distribution and the Manila second sewerage projects.

An official from the MWSS engineering group said these projects would help lift the bottom lines of Maynilad and Manila Water, but pipe-laying and other construction works would have to be completed first.

"Except for the Manila south project, which will benefit Maynilad customers in its southern service areas, Angat and Manila second sewerage will be both to their advantage," the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said.

The MWSS has allowed Maynilad and Manila Water to increase their basic rates by P4.07 and P2.54 per cubic meter.

Metro Manila consumers will be slapped with higher water rates beginning this month.

Maynilad customers will be charged P24.42 per cubic meter—a 20-percent increase in their water bills, which included value-added tax, and environmental and sewerage charges.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, December 28, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.5	5.5	4.6	5.4	25,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57.5	57.5	57	57.5	448,700
China Banking Corp.	560	590	560	590	1,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25	25.5	24.5	24.5	675,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	193	205	192	205	266,520
Philippine National Bank	67.5	67.5	67	67.5	142,000
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	30	28.5	30	26,700
Security Bank Corp.	17	17.25	16.75	17.25	77,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	16	16.25	15.5	15.5	65,200
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.04	1.04	40,000
First Abacus Financial	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	160,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1250	1250	1250	1250	10
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1050	1060	1040	1050	6,430
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24	24	24	24	22,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4.8	6.2	4.8	6.1	43,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.38	2,970,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	650	680	650	680	1,327,140
Ipeople Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	20,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	30,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.5	99,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	417.5	420	417.5	417.5	27,790
Ivantage Corp.	0.45	0.5	0.45	0.5	40,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	24,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	22.75	23	22.75	22.75	7,300
Manila Electric Co. B	30	30	29.5	29.5	814,100
Petron Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.44	1.44	4,809,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	1	0.95	1	380,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.1	1.1	0.97	1.1	105,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.16	2.16	2.1	2.1	3,005,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.6	1.62	1.6	1.62	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	130,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.5	55,000
Union Cement Corp.	1	1	0.93	0.96	680,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	610,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12	12.25	12	12.25	517,200
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	40,500
RFM Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.26	2.28	1,656,000
San Miguel Corp. A	42.5	43	42.5	43	8,300
San Miguel Corp. B	52.5	53	52.5	52.5	1,076,900
Universal Robina Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	2,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.38	260,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	1,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	60,000
Ayala Corp.	4.65	4.7	4.6	4.7	3,671,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	100,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	1,200
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.78	0.78	530,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	34,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.9	2.1	1.9	2.1	41,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	11	10.25	11	26,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.63	0.6	0.6	15,020,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	3,370,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.8	0.8	900,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	1,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26	26	25.5	25.5	34,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	500,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	70,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	34,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.71	4,270,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	21,890,000
Music Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	3,830,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	2,400,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	300,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.6	25,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	250,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	150,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10 000
Federal Chemicals Inc.	6.8	7.2	6.8	7.2	50,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	10,000
Matsushita Elec. Phil. Corp	5.40	5.8	5.4	5.8	6,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.7	250,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.08	0.1	0.08	0.1	3,000,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14	14	14	62,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.54	0.56	0.54	0.56	63,940,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.48	0.51	100,000
Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.	23	25.5	23	25.5	210,400
Manila Jockey Club	10	10	10	10	22,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.13	0.2	0.13	0.2	900,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	400,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.-Pref	10	10	10	10	600
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.84	1.86	1.74	1.74	312,000
Globe Tel. A - Warrants	460	480	460	480	660
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	620	670	620	670	17,350
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	15	15	10	10	500
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.005	0.005	0.0048	0.005	39,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	9.5	10.25	9	10.25	1,010,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.85	4.9	4.85	4.85	3,617,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	250,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	360,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.2	0.215	0.2	0.215	1,100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	3,010,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.23	0.235	0.23	0.23	4,030,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	5,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.66	1.66	12,334,000
City & Land Developers	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	18,000
SM Development Corp.	0.9	1	0.9	1	3,360,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6,241,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	2,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	3	3.1	2.9	3.1	97,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	7,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	57,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	1,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	220,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	2,800,000
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	21,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	75,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.22	0.25	0.22	0.25	20,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,954,260	115,734,915.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	244,573,840	1,130,497,130.00
PRO	34,325,000	83,406,150.00
Mining	68,917,000	793,900.00
OIL	100,820,000	614,400.00
GRAND TOTALS:	450,591,100	1,331,048,375.00

	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	505.02	UP 8.20
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,579.39	UP 21.50
PRO	501.30	DOWN 0.81
Mining	1,011.29	UP 2.79
OIL	1.93	DOWN 0.03
All Shares Index	682.87	DOWN 0.51
Composite	1,168.08	UP 15.22

NO. OF ADVANCES: 50; NO. OF DECLINES: 30; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 37;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 117; NO. OF TRADES: 2,487

DENR to bar export of raw ore to Japan

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources is set to issue an order barring nickel mining firms from exporting raw ore materials to Japan.

In an interview, Bureau of Mines and Geosciences Director Horace Ramos said this move should encourage the country's nickel producers to put up their own ore processing plant.

The Philippine Nickel Mining Corp., Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Co., Taganito Nickel Mining Corp. and other nickel mining firms will be given at least five years to build a processing plant and adhere to the government's new policy, Ramos told the INQUIRER.

The Philippines lacks a processing plant that can extract nickel from ore.

The DENR recently blocked the proposed reopening this year of the Manikani nickel mine. The operators of this mine had planned to export their ore production to Japan.

"When minerals are taken out, they should at least be processed," Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez said.

He said the new policy took into consideration rising community opposition to mining projects.

"We will undertake policies that discourage quarrying of our land. It's practically quarrying of our land and taking them overseas," he said in defending his department's new policy.

Christine A. Gaylican

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•98Besta2.7 252T 9276597•

•98Pregio3.0 320T 9276597•

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•98 MB100D P368T 9276597•

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Starex'99 green,low mileage, A/T P570T •7214341•7221326•

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CARS FOR RENT

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Vans Coaster Bus 913-9123

CARS/VANS/BRIDAL 8955627

HiAce;L300;BrdalMB;Vans9296250

IT/HIACE 9136710/4333682

L300 T7411356

MB HiAce L3 Urvan 8257135

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CAR LOAN

1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523/24

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

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2% w/o taking car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 3646928

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3732083

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ELECTRONIC & INDUSTRIAL EQUIP

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others, High Price CASH CALL 09178142309/7269687

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ANY ROLEX
Buy / Sell / Pawn / Repair Tel# 804-0484 • 834-2886

SALE EDUC'L PLAN 8061574

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To our dear advertisers,

Allow us to greet you all "A Prosperous New Year" and may the year to come shower you all with God's blessing of peace, love, happiness and good health.

From The Classified Ads Staff

We accept Classified advertisements
Lines. Recruitment. Obituaries. Bidding

in Luzon

Bakit lalayo ka pa? Sa INQUIRER, *convenient na sulit pa!*

[illegible]

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
The Widest Reaching Classifieds

The PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER enjoys the biggest circulation and readership among all the major broadsheets in the country. It has a dominant market share of over 55% according to the 2000 Asia Research Organization (ARO) Tri-Media Study.

We accept Classified advertisements
Lines. Recruitment. Obituaries. Bidding

in Visayas

Diri na ta sa INQUIRER *bay! Sayon na sulit pa!*

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Ms. Elizabeth Verdeflor
Bubbles N' Swirls
Torra Building, La Salle Avenue
Bacolod City
Telefax No. (034) 433-3628
Cell. No. (0917) 985-2691
Cebu
Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario Street, Cebu City
Tel. No. (032) 232-7618
Dumaguete City
Mr. Raymund Mercado
Hi-Top News Magazine & General Merchandise
Dr. V. Locsin Street, Dumaguete City
Tel. Nos. (035) 225-5796/225-4364
Mr. Ramon Charles Sy
New Ronie's
Dr. V. Locsin Street, Dumaguete City
Tel. Nos. (035) 225-4320/422-7452
Fax No. (035) 255-1182
Iloilo
Mr. Eduardo Ty
c/o Ms. Marilou Ty
Eddie-Mar News & Magazine Center
Ground Floor, Bombo Radio Building
Mapa Street, Iloilo City
Tel. No. (033) 337-3120/337-6018
Mr. Jim Feliciano
309 Ledesma Street, Iloilo City
Tel. No. (033) 508-2530
Cell. No. (0917) 401-9180

Kalibo
Dra. Bessa Candelario
Candelario Enterprise
RB Newspapers, Magazine & Song Hits Distribution Agency
Pastrana Street, Kalibo, Aklan
Tel. Nos. (036) 262-4156/268-5200
Roxas City
Ms. Marieta Santos
M. Santos Komiks Magazines & Newspaper Dealer
Door C, MB Building
Fuentes Drive, Roxas City
Tel. Nos. (036) 621-5586/522-6925
Tacloban City
Mr. Neil Montejo
Montejo's Newspaper Supply
246 Avenida Veteranos
Tacloban City
Tel. Nos. (053)325-6743/321-2954
Tagbilaran City
Mr. Ferdinand Mercado
Doña Rosario Village
G. Penaflor Street
Tagbilaran City
Tel. No. (038) 411-5007

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in Mindanao

Ake ya tu na INQUIRER. *Sirca ya, sulit pa!*

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R.C. Busa Trading
490 G. Flores Avenue
Butuan City
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(085) 225-3169/341-5082
Cagayan de Oro City
OMNI General Merchandise
Dr. I De Leon Building
Pabayo-Pacuna Streets
Cagayan de Oro City
Tel. Nos. (08822) 722-530
(088) 856-5253
Grandstar News & Magazines
122 Cruz Taal corner Pabayo Street
Cagayan de Oro City
Tel. Nos. (088) 857-2571/857-1612
Telefax No. (088) 231-3248
E-mail: grandstar@hotmail.com
Cotabato
Marquez News & Magazine Agency
Marquez Building, 51 Sinsuat Avenue
Cotabato City
Tel. Nos. (064) 421-3264/421-8611/
(064) 229-7089 (Loliot - Secretary)
Davao City
Dabaw Periodicals, Inc.
Santos Building, Gov. Duterte Street
Davao City (fronting Galleria Hotel)
Tel. Nos. (082) 226-4406/221-3379/
221-3424/226-2931

Babasahin ATBP.
Lower Level, Gaisano Mall
Bajada, Davao City
Ground Floor, Victoria Plaza
Bajada, Davao City
Tel. Nos. (082) 221-3927/227-4410/300-2920
General Santos
Mr. Ramon Dimalanta
GSC Newscenter, Dimalanta Building
35 Pioneer Avenue, General Santos City
Tel. Nos. (083) 301-8731/301-6244
Pagadian City
Mr. Eduardo Villar Clavero
Edmar News - Advertising Agency
Bonifacio Street, Pagadian City
Tel. Nos. (062) 215-1448/214-2641
Cell. No. (0919) 660-0001
Zamboanga
Mr. James Hao
Marlen's Variety Store
86-88 Sevilla Street, Zamboanga City
Tel. Nos. (062) 991-4294/991-0973
Mr. Ruben Bautista
c/o Norie Bautista
Christian Vincent Newsstand
P. Briliantes Street corner Campaner Street
Zamboanga City
Tel. Nos. (062) 991-2965/990-4016

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OBITUARIES

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN •

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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ARLINGTON EAST THE GARDEN CHAPELS
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Tels. 747-8508; 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City; Tel. 732-0309; 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu
Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City; Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City; Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
DAVAO FUNERAL HOME
#2 Bayani St., Cubao, Quezon City
Tels. 740-2683; 781-3705; 781-3688; 413-9400; 715-5504
DALLUAY MEMORIAL SERVICES
#42 Upper Kalaklan, Olongapo City
Tels. (047) 222-3605; (047) 611-1066; (047) 222-4512; (047) 224-2014
DON BOSCO CHAPELS
Pasay Road, Makati City; Tel. 894-5932 to 34
DULCE MEMORIAL SERVICES
Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dinalupihan St., Manuguit, Manila
Tels. 713-5102; 741-5125; 741-5133; Fax No. 711-3064
FLORESCO FUNERAL HOME
219 Gen. Luna St., Concepcion, Malabon, Metro Manila
Tels. 281-2063; 281-3034; 281-0522
FUNERARIA PANGILINAN
Santo Entierro cor. P. Burgos St., Lourdes Sur, Angeles City
Tels. (045) 888-2059; (045) 322-5347
F. SANTIAGO MEMORIAL HOMES
13V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City; Tels. 646-1725; 646-1730
FUNERARIA ANGEL QUIOGUE
No. 67 Pasig Boulevard Extension, Pasig City; Tels. 641-7909; 641-1735
M. Almeda St., Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-3010; 633-3602
GARDEN OF MEMORIES MEMORIAL PARK
Caisadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-6101 to 02

HOLY TRINITY MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Sucat, Parañaque City; Tels. 825-1296; 825-1291
LA FUNERARIA LAWRENCE BAQUIRAN
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Tel. 722-2730; Cell (0917) 5680136; (0917) 5680145
Manila #23 Pato St., Project 2, Quezon City; Tel. 434-3259
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LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
143 G. Araneta Ave. cor. Kaliraya St., Quezon City; Tels. 740-3206 to 11
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
79 Naguilian Rd., Baguio City; Tel. (074) 443-3337
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EDSA cor. Bernardino St., Guadalupe, Makati City; Tel. 896-1011 to 19
MARIAN MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Marcos Hiway, Antipolo, Rizal; Tels. 645-1855; 682-0209; 682-0210
MT. SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL
Arellano St., Dagupan City
Tels. (075) 515-5960; 515-6529; 522-8783; (0919) 348-7131
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ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
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Mandalagan, Bacolod City; Tel. 433-7132
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SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City; Telefax 724-4139; 725-2044
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village, Makati City; Tels. 852-0228; 852-7204
ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila; Tels. 749-3670; 781-1772
ST. PETER FUNERAL HOMES
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Tels. 831-3797; 844-7840; 843-1801; 845-4036
WELINGTON FUNERAL SERVICES
1511 Gen. Luna St., Paco, Manila; Tels. 522-8046; 522-9438; 400-5394

OUR DEARLY BELOVED

VENERACION A. CARREON

Iba, Zambales

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 30, 2001 at the age of 88.

Her late husband **Jose V. Carreon** (†); loving children **Cecilia** and **Salvador De Joya** (†), **Jose Jr.** and **Cynthia Recto, Melinda** and **Primo Arambulo, Francisco, Jorge** and **Ma. Elena Rodriguez;** grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal rest of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Sta. Rita Parish Church, Philamlife Homes, Quezon City.

Interment will be on January 3, 2002, 3 o'clock at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

People, Events & Products

Aries B. Espinosa, Editor aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

NSP hails first Blue Diamond executive

MULTI-LEVEL marketing (MLM) is a thriving industry that continues to attract individuals in pursuit of an alternative business venture. For its vast benefits such as increased profits, freedom, independence and the infinite possibilities of growth and success, it is not surprising for a young, intelligent and goal-oriented person like Joy Ong to delve into the challenging arena of MLM business.

Formerly a marketing manager of a well-known fastfood chain, Joy Ong joined Nu Skin in 1998, inspired and captivated by the company's extraordinary vision and unique business opportunities. It did not take long for Ong to learn by heart the fundamentals of the Nu Skin business. With her commitment and determination, Ong obtained high sales, profits and expanded network. Starting as a distributor, Ong persevered and became an executive. From then on she continuously progressed, attaining the distinguished titles – Gold Executive, Ruby Executive and Emerald Executive. She was the top winner of the Outstanding Professional in Sales (TOPS) Competition in October 2000 and the Excellence in Business Club Winner (Group Sales Excellence, Platinum) in May and July 2001.

Recently, Ong attained greater achievement as she was promoted to Nu skin Philippines' First Blue Diamond Executive, one of the top-level positions in the Nu Skin business.

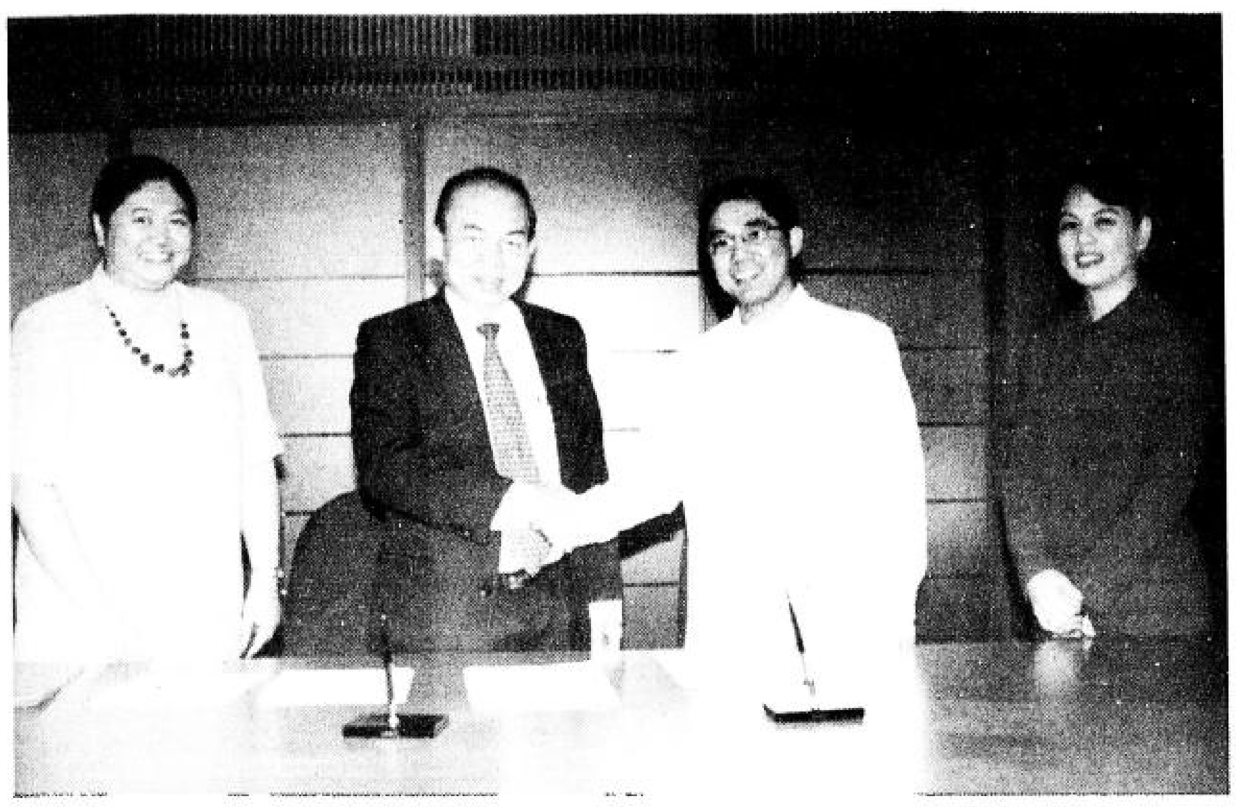
She accounts, "the journey to this achievement has been tough, challenging as well as physically and emotionally draining. But it was all worth it, for this journey has given me a better udnerstanding of myself – who I was and what I can achieve. Moreover, I had the opportunity to meet numerous people and somehow make a difference in their lives.''

Indeed, Ong is one of NSP's precious gems. She has significantly contributed to the sales growth of the company, supported its distributor and community projects, and brought great honor, as she became a Blue Diamond. Ong also helped hone budding entrepreneurs who were new in the MLM business.

Bernie Mercado, NSP general manager, relates, ''We are privileged to have Joy Ong on our team. Finally, we have a Blue Diamond from Nu Skin Philippines, a clear vote of confidence that the Philippines is a good and profitable market. Success is at hand to those who are determined, industrious and persevering. May the rest of our distributors be inspired by the success of Joanna Joy Ong."

Evidently, Ong was born to be a marketer for she possess a strategic mind, skills and warm personality that can draw in people. When she was a student at De La Salle University, the Philippine Marketing Association (PMA) adjudged Ong as one of the most outstanding marketing students of the Philippines. After she graduated, Ong was employed in reputable companies where she was in charge of managing and marketing various brands and products.

But it was in multi-level marketing where Ong gained career fulfillment and success. Beyond business and earning profits, Ong takes pride in her career because through Nu Skin and its vast array of products, she is able to help people lead better lives. And for her, this is the epitome of success.



PHILAM SAVINGS BANK AGREEMENT

Philam Plans president and CEO Eliseo P. Dizon Jr. formalizes the pre-need company's agreement with Philam Savings Bank, appointing the latter as another Philam Plans trustee bank. Philam Savings Bank will be handling the pre-need company's life plan, education and pension trust funds. Sealing the agreement with lawyer Dizon is Philam Savings Bank president and CEO Rolando Tanchanco. Witnessing the event are Philam Plans finance group first vice president Melinda Bustamante (left) and Philam Savings Bank vice president and trust officer Karen Catibayan.

GLOBE TELCARD SUPPORTS LA SALLE'S TAGIS TALINO

Globe TelCard, the chip card used to make calls in Globe Telecom Payphones, recently sponsored 'Tagis Talino' of La Salle Greenhills in celebration of its Filipino Week. During the event, Globe TelCard gave away prizes and telcards to winners of the Tagis Talino event comprised of an oratorical and storytelling contest. Shown are (from left) Globe Payphones and Phonecards product manager Rica Guevarra, contest winners Reginald Villaver, Norman Telan, Paolo Nacorda and Michael Salomon and Globe Payphones and Phonecards associate product manager Lara Marie Lua. Globe Telcard is the pocket-friendly phone card service of Globe Telecom. It offers the lowest call rates: US$.40 per minute for IDD; P3 per minute for NDD and P1.50 for the first two minutes in local calls.

BASF PHILIPPINES PRESIDENT LEADS EMPLOYEES IN TREE PLANTING

Over 130 employees participated in BASF's corporate concern for the environment taking the lead for a cleaner and greener tomorrow. BASF is steadfast in its commitment to sustainable development and the conservation of natural resources. Photo shows Bruno Friesen, president and managing director, during the tree-planting ceremony, together with his vice presidents (from left) Freddie Felten , Flor Plan, Marcy Quismundo, president of BASF Coatings; Virgilio Lorenzo, manager of Carmelray; Friesen, Eric Reynoso and Jessica Lara.

PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE EXPORTERS, INC.
(PASEI) AND
KABAYAN HOTEL

KABAYAN HOTEL SUPPORTS OFWS

KABAYAN Hotel, the first local hotel that caters to the overseas Filipino workers, forged an agreement with the Philippine Association of Service Exporters Inc. regarding sponsorship in the pre-departure orientations for OFWs regularly undertaken by Pasei, a big land-based association of recruitment agencies authorized by the labor department and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. From left, Kabayan Hotel product operations manager Dante C. Cruz, Kabayan Hotel president Nelson L. Napud, Pasei president Victor Fernandez and Kabayan Hotel marketing officer Paul Ledesma.

BSA donates computers, software to public schools

THE BUSINESS Software Alliance (BSA), an organization of the world's leading software manufacturers fighting software piracy, recently donated computers and software to Pugad Lawin High School in Quezon City. The computers, which came with a mouse and speakers, were loaded with BSA member software products.

According to BSA vice president for Philippines Ronald Chua, the computer and software donation is part of BSA's commitment in promoting and protecting intellectual property rights (IPR) in the Philippines and in helping educational institutions in improving the student's level of expertise in software.

"One of the efforts of BSA is to educate computer users on software copyrights. Through the computer donation, BSA hopes that students will appreciate that software is as important as the hardware. We believe that the young people, as early as possible, should be taught the importance of respect for IPR laws. And as computer uses, they should also be aware that technology comes with the respect for the use of it," said Chua.

Pugad Lawin High School, located in Barangay Toro hills, Quezon City, used to own only two computers. Through the efforts of ConnectEd.ph, a program under the PCs for public schools of the Department of Trade and Industry, the school now has its very own computer laboratory. Aside from the BSA, the Makati Business Club has also donated computers to Pugad Lawin High School while the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) has been providing technical assistance.

The computer donation was highlighted with a turnover ceremony attended by Chua, Ricardo Romulo, chair of Makati Business Club, Guillermo Luz, executive director of Makati Business Club, and Dr. Aquilina Rivas, Quezon City schools division superintendent.

The Business Software Alliance (BSA) is the voice of the world's software and Internet industry. Its members include AccTrak21, Adobe, Apple Computer, Autodesk, Bentley Systems, Borland, CNC software/Mastercam, Compaq, Dell, Entrust, IBM, Intel, Intuit, Lotus Development, Macromedia, Microsoft, Network Associates, Novell, Sybase, Symantec and UGS.

Swiss Miss gift certificate makes a generous gift idea this holiday season

THE CHRISTMAS, as it always has been is a time when gift giving is the most cherished ritual. For most of us, the best gift idea that would be the one that not only warms the heart of its giver but also brings happiness to its receiver.

Swiss Miss Premium Ice Cream, the ice cream made from 100 percent full cream milk that conforms to the highest standards of the US. FDA, gives you a unique idea – the Swiss Miss Premium Ice Cream Gift Certificate.

With the Swiss Miss Premium Ice Cream Gift Certificate, the bearer is entitled to a half gallon of the delectable-tasting, Swiss Miss Premium Ice Cream can be redeemed in over 150 supermarkets nationwide. What makes it so unique is that it comes in four colorful gift jackets specially designed by Hallmark, the world's number greeting card company. Each of the four designs depict the joyous cheer of the Christmas Season.

To add more color to the gift giving, part of the proceeds from the Swiss Miss Premium Ice Cream Gift Certificate will be donated to the Kaisahang Buhay Foundation, an organization which provides rehabilitative programs for unwed mothers and day care centers for low income families.

The Swiss Miss Premium Gift Certificate is available through the URC Dairy Products Division with telephone numbers 671-3993 and 249-8824 or log on to their website at www.gcphilippines.com. It can be redeemed until March 31, 2002.

FRANCHISE ASIA 2001
Asia to World

SAP CONSULTANT SPEAKS AT FRANCHISE ASIA 2001

Speaking on Information Technology: New Dimension in Retailing, SAP Philippines Systems consultant Eymard Altoveros (standing left), recently discussed the contribution of enterprise technology to enhancing business process efficiency and productivity and improving competitiveness in tough markets at Franchise Asia 2001. During the forum, Altoveros explained how Asian business focused on franchising and retailing can improve operational efficiency and gain profitability by employing enterprise system solutions. Awarding a plaque of appreciation to Altoveros is Philippines Franchise Association vice president for government relations and Padi's Point chair Vince Padilla (standing right).

ASIATRUST-FOREX CARGO INKS REMITTANCE AGREEMENT

Asiatrust Bank and Forex Cargo Malaysia recently signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for facilitating remittances of funds and SSS contributions and payments from Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and other individuals in Malaysia to their beneficiaries in the Philippines. This adds to the tie-ups under Asiatrust's Fast-Pas! Remit program which already has presence in Singapore, Hong Kong, Canada, Qatar and Kuwait. Present during the MOA signing were (seated, from left) Asiatrust AVP Raymund Jose M. Abog of International Remittance, Forex cargo director Alan Canlas and Asiatrust vice president Elmer L. Villegas of international remittance. Present to witness the signing was Asiatrust AVP Maria B. Laraya of marketing services.

PHILIPS SPONSORS RAJO LAUREL'S COLLECTION '01

Philips Consumer Electronics (PCE), one of the world's biggest consumer electronics companies, was one of the main presenters of Collection '01, a show featuring the latest fashion collection of top young designer Rajo Laurel. The company's sponsorship of Laurel's show is part of PCE's A Blend of Art and Technology, a series of events that reflects the creative mix of cutting-edge designs and breakthrough technologies. Shown on photo are (from left) designer Rajo Laurel, PCE vice president and general manager Tony Lim and Philips Philippines president and CEO Pratt Hsu.

Urban planning a challenge to realtors

BY JAIME L. YANEZA SR., LL. B., C. E.
Contributor

ILLUSTRAATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

URBANIZATION of rural areas and urban renewal or rehabilitation is a major concern of our government. Notable infrastructure developments such as MRTs, LRTs, skyways, underpass and flyovers were either already constructed or are now on their completion stages, respectively; and, in the past, a model zoning ordinance was promulgated for the local government units through the Human Settlements Commission.

The National Economic Development Authority (Neda) then, in coordination with the National Coordinating Council for Town Planning, Housing and Zoning, gave seminar-workshops on the mechanics of town planning, land use planning, housing planning and zoning. And, very recently, Secretary Michael T. Defensor of the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board enjoined all the concerned sectors on the use and application of "urban planning" principles to develop certain growth centers in each of our country's 14 regions, including the ARMM.

Urban planning is generally defined as the community's effort to promote the development of the environment for the maximum benefit of the greatest number. It seeks to achieve the most favorable community change and growth—its public areas, services and facilities—in an orderly manner with a minimum of coercion or sacrifice of the rights and privileges of private property ownership.

If the boards of realty service practitioners' associations throughout the Philippines are to exist according to their avowed aims and purposes, they must make available to the authorities concerned their knowledge of real estate and land use problems. "To cooperate with government agencies as well as with other trade organizations on adoption of laws, ordinances and regulations on real estate" is one of the board's primordial objectives. A board or the concerned realty service practitioners' association, however, can only help effectively only if the objectives and limitations of urban planning, and the instruments by which urban development is effected are clearly understood by them.

Objectives

The planning of a city or of an urban development program begins with the identification of its objectives with due regard to the people's aspirations, existing land-use patterns, socio-economic situation, transport systems, administrative resources, public utilities and services. And, in general, the objectives of city planning are as follows:

- To stimulate the steady, orderly growth and rebuilding of a community so that all of its land facilities will be used most suitably and advantageously.
- To guide the rate and direction of the community's future growth for efficient, optimum use of existing public facilities, such as streets, utilities, hospitals and schools.
- To provide for acquisition by the city of additional, adequate well-located parks and school sites in areas of future growth while they are still available inexpensively, and without necessity of evicting existing land users.
- To arrest the spread of neighborhood deterioration, and to bring an end to undesirable or detrimental influences on the community.
- To capitalize on its most important natural and man-made resources as growth and regeneration continue.
- To conserve and expand the community's most desirable land use.
- To stimulate public interests in community problems.
- To stabilize the value of properties.

However, with the ever-changing nature of a city, and the influence on it of all social, political, cultural and economic forces, which are beyond reasonable control, these objectives cannot be fully attained.

In addition to this, property ownership under our Civil Code involves general and independent rights of a person to control and dispose of a property, subject only to the restrictions imposed by law or contract, where no broad government power exists to compel the owner to improve a particular piece of land, or to replace a building, at a specified time in a certain manner—so long as he does not violate the rights of others.

Master plan

So that the community can largely, or extensively achieve its planning objectives, government programs and activities must be in coordination with the urban development "master plan." For instance, since the government has control and responsibility for determining the location, size, number and nature of various public works and facilities, such as highways, roads, sewer and water lines, parks, hospitals, schools and public service buildings, it may direct such public works and improvements in priority areas prescribed by the master plan.

With regard to private property, its use may be influenced and stimulated through the government's administrative powers and legal instruments, such as zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and through building, sanitary, housing and fire codes.

It may be of help to note that a zoning ordinance is the most effective instrument in directing community growth and improvement, and in establishing a pattern for the types of development to be located in designated areas.

Zoning map

The zoning map or the "land use plan" complements the zoning ordinance. It divides the city into "use districts" specifying the general use permitted on land in each district, or indicating what uses are forbidden in particular places. It may limit the height of buildings in the district, and specify the ratio of improvements to site area.

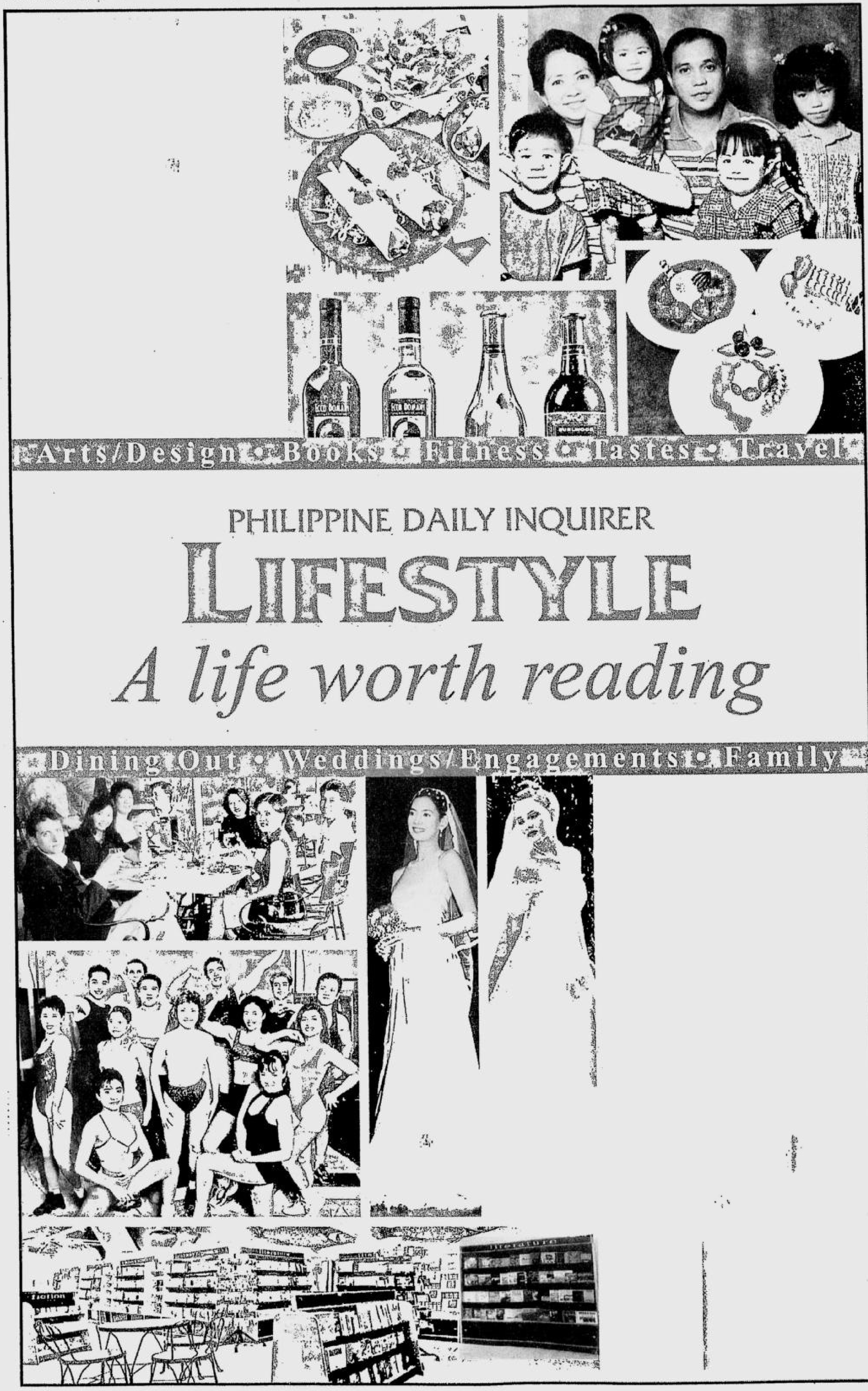
Zoning must maintain the character of existing areas against undesirable intrusions, and establish in advance the particular type of land uses that will be allowed and encouraged in areas that are initially developed.

And, of course, the ordinance usually contains provisions for appeals where permission may be obtained to develop or improve a particular parcel of land in a manner not authorized by the land use plan. Such authorizations are of two kinds, and they are known as "variances" and "exceptions."

At present, regional growth centers throughout the country must be given a timetable to submit their updated proposed zoning map or "land-use plan." This is one of the critical phases of urban planning where the knowledge and experience of realty service practitioners could be of great help. It is where the boards or realty service practitioners' associations could employ their understanding of the principles of ecology, urban and rural land use, planning and development management to help in fostering orderly community development.

Urban planning must therefore be a challenge to all real estate associations or boards. Because its complexities are influenced by real estate and land use problems, it offers them the opportunity to rally behind the government and to support the national efforts toward economic and social progress.

(The writer is a certified real estate appraiser, broker and consultant, managing partner of JL Yaneza & Co., Realtors, and a past president of the Philippine Association of Realty Consultants.)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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LIFESTYLE
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URBAN POOR HOUSING BUDGET
Some 50,000 urban poor families informally occupying government or privately owned lands will receive assistance up to next year to ensure their land tenure and housing requirements through the government's Community Mortgage Program should the corresponding budget funds be made available. Shown during a recent budgetary hearing are lawyers Angelico T. Salud, president, National Home Mortgage Finance Corp., and Edgardo D. Pamintuan, general manager, National Housing Authority. The NHMFC and the NHA are involved in housing the informal sector.

2-day seminar starts Jan. 12

THE PASAY-MAKATI Realtors Board Inc. is scheduling its next round of Continuing Education Program (CEP) seminars on Jan. 12 and 19, both Saturdays, from 8:30 to 5:30 p.m. This two-day series of seminars will accomplish the required 16 hours credits. The comprehensive program will be held at the Main Dining, Penthouse, Old Makati Stock Exchange Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City

Interested parties may call up the PMRB secretariat at 893-05-85/69 or e-mail at pmrb@broline.com. For registration,you can also visit its offices at Unit 502-P 5th floor Parking Bldg, Cityland 10 cor H.V. dela Costa St. and Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

REAL ESTATE

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

2001 HIGHLIGHTS

The year of property disputes

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

DEVELOPERS may have been upbeat last year. But they couldn't stop history from happening, and ultimately affecting how the markets regarded the real estate industry. It was the year when the *masa* (masses) went to Edsa (and Malacañang). It was the year when skyscrapers became self-destructing hangars for jumbo jets.

After the smoke had cleared, many observers had predicted it would be a buyer's (and tenant's) market out there. The present administration seems to be more determined in its bid to make housing more affordable to the homeless. Analysts also cited that there is an oversupply of office spaces in the business districts in 2001.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo also stated in December that she would not oppose any move by Congress to extend the Rent Control Law that could help 5.5 million Filipinos who rent their dwellings. The House bill limited rent increases to 10 percent annually for the next three years. Pag-Ibig, the government's home loans agency, may be more open to talks with delinquent homeowners; technologies may be making houses easier—and cheaper—to make.

Still, like the tumult reflected in many conflicts abroad, 2001 has been a year of disputes among the players in local real estate.

Farmers vs golfers

Early January, a dispute between a golf course developer and farmers began. A planned 141-hectare golf course in Capitol Hills, Quezon City, was disputed by affected farmers. The golf course was part of a 1,800-hectare land in Rodriguez, Rizal province. The Macabud farmers who disputed the golf course development claimed the greens would cut off their water supply. Former Agrarian Reform Secretary Horacio Morales had earlier declared that the 124 hectares in Macabud, Rodriguez, Rizal, being applied for exemption by Capitol Golf—through lawyer Matias Defensor—was not covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. Thus, Capitol Golf had the right to do whatever it pleased with the property.

ILLUSTRAATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Macabud farmer leader Elvira Baladad said this decision put the farmers at risk because Morales based it on DOJ opinion 44 that stated that all the areas classified as commercial, residential and industrial prior to the enactment of Republic Act 6657, or CARP, were exempted from CARP coverage. The entire Barangay Macabud land, she claimed, had not been classified as residential, commercial or industrial but was actually under a Deferred Land Use Zone. Other farmer leaders, on the other hand, argued that the Sangguniang Bayan of Rodriguez already reclassified Macabud as agricultural, and it was reflected in the strategic agricultural and fisheries development zone map of Rodriguez.

Farmers supported their statement by placing Macabud as within the La Mesa watershed area, where 86 million liters of water sustain the needs of Metro Manila residents every day.

Families vs corporations

The next major dispute struck south of Manila. A 99-hectare property in Las Piñas became the subject of a land dispute between the Espinosa family, who claimed to be the original owners of 75 hectares of the property, and the Firestone Ceramic Inc., who claimed 18 hectares of it. So what's wrong with this case, one might ask. Add up 75 and 18, and there would still be six hectares of free space between the two parties. Well, location is everything. And it seems the Espinosas and Firestone Ceramic wanted the same "prime" spot in that land, or their territories were overlapping each other.

Chinese businessman Mariano Nocom, owner of Firestone, issuing his statement through his lawyers, said that for the first time in the long drawn-out case, Firestone had the evidence to prove that Benito Gonzales, from whom Firestone bought the property, had been its owner since 1917. The Firestone group cited as evidence a previous decision of the Court of Appeals ejecting a group of military officers who had been previously occupying the property.

The Espinosa lawyers—Sabino Padilla Jr. and Eduardo Lizares—on the other hand, countered that the Espinosas had been paying realty taxes on their own 18-hectare spot since 1956 when they acquired the property from Veronica Gana, the daughter of the original registered owners. Padilla and Lizares added the family had already built a concrete perimeter fence.

The Espinosa lawyers further said that the private petitioners themselves had admitted that they could not enter into possession of the subject property because the property was currently jointly owned by the Espinosas and Peltan Development Corp.

Firestone Ceramic Inc. is claiming 3.7 hectares of the property. Real estate firm Peltan Development Inc. and the Espinosa group claim ownership of over 75 hectares of the disputed real estate. The essence of this legal dispute is seen to cross its 99-hectare border. The Espinosa lawyers had warned that even the properties of the Ayalas, the Legardas and other historically landed families would be put to question on the basis of the outcome of this case.

Government vs corporations

Then came the land dispute between the Philippine government versus two business groups early in 2001. In mid-January, it was reported that the government had a "very strong case" against two business groups in recovering a 99.6-hectare prime property in Las Piñas City worth nearly P30 billion (as valued by the Office of the Solicitor General).

The OSG said that the land in question could not have been part of the land declassified in 1928 as alienable and disposable, contrary to what the two business groups had claimed. Solicitor General Ricardo Galvez said that the entire territory of Las Piñas was originally classified as forestland until 1928 when some 1200 hectares of the entire 2,556 hectares of the town was declared alienable and disposable.

The disputed land, he concluded, was not part of the 1928 decision.

Old vs new

Sometimes, old conflicts, like dormant volcanoes, suddenly erupt again. One such example was the southern Pinugay land dispute.

The 9-year clash between the southern Pinugay farmers multipurpose cooperative and the Philippine Communication Satellite was renewed when accusations were exchanged during a January preliminary hearing. Philcomsat accused the Pinugay farmers as "a band of professional squatters" who entered into the restricted security zone and put up houses without consent from Philcomsat or the Department of National Defense.

The farmers, on their part, accused Philcomsat's chief of security of the eviction of 400 farmer occupants and the demolition of their houses without a court order, a 30-day notice and consultation and the provision of a relocation site.

Another "old grudge" was renewed last year when a farmers group filed contempt charges against Moldex Realty. The realty firm didn't take it sitting down. Samahang Magbubukid ng Sapang Palay spokesperson and Samahang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas chair Jaime Tadeo reported the destruction of portions of the 108.5-hectare Sapang Palay plantation in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, was the action of Moldex Realty. It allegedly "used four bulldozers and was aided by policemen, who scraped the planted rice fields, mango trees and fishponds containing 1,500 tilapia in nine days without a Supreme Court or a land conversion order." Moldex was reported to be building a subdivision in the area called Metro Gate/Heritage Homes.

Moldex Realty chair Jacinto T. Uy disclosed in an interview that the farmers who aired their complaints to the INQUIRER in February were the ones who resorted to extortion with unreasonable and unlawful demands on Moldex. Uy claimed that the disturbance compensation of P2.9 million set by the municipal agrarian reform officers has been with the Land Bank since 1997.

Farmers, he said, refused to accept the compensation because they were asking for more. He accused Tadeo of resorting to misinformation to mislead the public from the real situation at Sapang Palay. Moldex showed the legal documents containing the Office of the President's conversion clearance, the affirmation of the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court and the development permit from the Sangguniang Bayan of San Jose del Monte and the Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance's implementation of conversion clearance.

Partner vs partner

Sometimes, joint ventures just don't work to both parties' advantage. Mandaluyong-based real estate firm Prime Link Properties Development Corp. accused another real estate firm Pamana Island Resort Hotel and Marina Club Inc of being the cause of the failure of their joint venture.

In July 1996, Primelink and Pamana agreed to jointly develop the six-hectare Pamana Island—also known as Snake Island—in the middle of Subic Bay, Zambales, into a grand P800-million Subic Island residential marina yacht club.

Two years later, Pamana reportedly terminated the joint-venture agreement. It was too late. Money had already been thrown in. A group of private investors had asked the Senate to investigate Primelink, which allegedly sold them more than P60 million worth of stocks. The company was later found to be neither a licensed broker nor an authorized dealer of securities. Primelink argued it was the victim, stating that Pamana "unilaterally and without basis" terminated the agreement, effectively preventing the project from being developed. The court of appeals also dismissed Primelink's plea to reverse a SEC ruling, which banned the real estate firm from selling its membership shares to the public.

(Next issue: Updates on these cases)

Developers unite to push mass housing program

SIX noted private developer groups has agreed to close ranks and work together by signing a memorandum of agreement for a more efficient and cohesive implementation of the government's mass housing program.

The agreement also strengthens the Private Sector Consultative Council for Shelter with the inclusion of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Association (Creba), thus bringing the council's membership to six.

The other five members of the council are the Builders' Alliance Toward Action (Bata), the National Real Estate Association, the Organization of Socialized Housing Developers of the Philippines, the Subdivision and Housing Developers' Association and the Women in Shelter and Its Environment.

Said HUDCC chair Mike Defensor: "The government housing sector truly welcomes this development, especially since the private sector is a vital partner in our housing program. There can only be strength in unity."

As a "consensus building body," the council will "undertake studies and endeavor to reconcile disagreements for a united industry position on housing issues."

With an avenue for swifter issue resolution, Defensor said he is confident the agreement will translate to the construction of more houses as the private sector is one of the leading builders of socialized and open market housing units.

The signing ceremony, held in the HUDCC conference room in Makati, was witnessed by Defensor, Rep. Corazon Malaniao, vice chair of the House committee on housing and urban development, and HUDCC secretary general Armando A. De Castro.

ST. PAUL CAMPUS IN A RESIDENTIAL VILLAGE

Residents of Island Park who want quality education for their kids need look no further than their own backyard. St. Paul College-Island Park, the first-ever St. Paul campus to be located within a residential village, occupies about 3,100 square meters of land donated by Island Park developer Brittany Corp. to the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres. This schoolyear, St. Paul College-Island Park opened six levels—nursery, kinder, prep and Grades one to three—for schoolchildren within the estate as well as the nearby towns of Dasmariñas, Silang, Imus, Bulihan and Muntinlupa City. Island Park, the country's first-ever American suburban style village, is located on Governor's Drive, Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Gov't agency promotes stress-graded lumber

IN THE NEXT two to three years, construction engineers can opt to use an alternative material to steel trusses for building: stress-graded lumber.

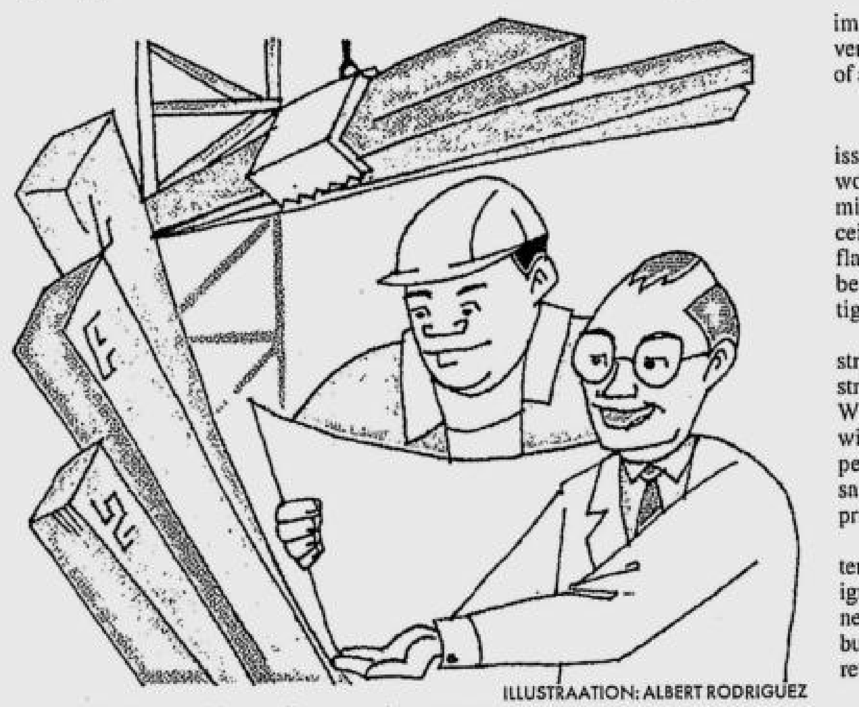
Dr. Florentino O. Tesoro, director of the Forest Products Research and Development Institute of the Department of Science and Technology, says stress-graded lumber is an attractive construction material at par with steel and concrete. Stress-graded lumber trusses are projected to be as durable as steel and 10 times cheaper.

Species substitution

Stress grading is a method of sorting lumber into groups, with each group having a set of predetermined structural design properties. Although lumber producers and traders adhere to some sort of visual sorting, there exist no common system of assigning quality to lumber for construction.

Stress grading allows for species substitution. A contractor, for instance, doesn't have to worry if the commonly used timber species needed for his project, like guljo, tanguille or yakal, is out of stock. He can always use a lesser-known species as long as it belongs to the same stress group, as the one required.

This, according to FPDI researcher Dr. Florence P. Soriano, is one of the biggest benefits of stress grading. "It relieves pressure on overexploited species by increasing the use of substitute lesser-known species. Also, it enables timber producers to improve their profits by pricing their products according to strength and not some unreliable criterion like color.



ILLUSTRAATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

"Stress grading reduces material waste and boost builder's confidence by allowing engineers to design structural components with the right amount of material required for stiffness and strength. It also provides quality control on imported lumber so that consumers get their money's worth."

Scientific system

Recently, the FPRDI partnered with the Japan-based International Tropical Timber Organization (Itto) to develop a scientific system that would grade lumber for structural use in the Philippines. In a two-and a-half-year project, an FPRDI-Itto team hopes to establish stress grades by conducting nondestructive and destructive test on full-size lumber available in the country.

Says Soriano, who heads the project: "Our plan is to promote the use of stress-graded lumber in constructing public school buildings. The DECS has estimated that the need for the public school classrooms would rise from 36,000 to 88,000 in the next 10 years. Assuming that one classroom would need 1,307 board feet of lumber, 16,000 to 20,000 cubic meters of stress-graded lumber are needed each year."

Soriano realizes that it will not be easy pushing for the use of stress-graded lumber in the Philippines. "The first thing people ask is where do we get all the lumber we need? These days, the campaign to save our forests has become so popular that it sounds almost indecent to advocate the use of wood in construction. But we need to realize that there are other options. We do not have to rely on our forests alone meet our timber needs.

"Of course, we can also depend on imported logs. In 1999, as much as three-fourths of our construction lumber was imported, importation being a convenient and relatively inexpensive means of acquiring lumber.

Misinformation

"Aside from the environmental issue, most builders tend to avoid using wood as much as they can because of misinformation, wood is often perceived as an inferior material—durable, flammable and has limited uses. People believe these myths without investigating the facts.

"The fact is, wood, considering its strength to weight ratio, is one of the strongest and stiffest of all materials. When properly used and cared for, it will last indefinitely as long as it is permanently dried or permanently saturated and treated with the right preservatives.

"Wood usually fails because builders tend to misuse and abuse the material by ignoring the principles of wood engineering. Wood is of course flammable, but few know that wood exhibits fire retardant properties not found in steel.

"Structures made of heavy timbers lose their strength gradually under fire, eliminating the possibility of sudden collapse. A three-story building of unprotected steel structural framework, for instance, will collapse much ahead of a similar building of wooden structural framework under the same fire conditions."

Thus, despite the odds, Tesoro sees a future for lumber stress grading in the Philippines. "First, however," he clarifies, "we need to dispel all these myths about wood as a construction material, and assure people that there are sustainable sources of timber aside from our forest."

The FPRDI is based at College, Laguna. For more information on lumber stress grading, call up Dr. Florence P. Soriano at (049)-536-2377-2586.

Floirendo pushes with beach resort regulation

IN A BID to keep operations of beach resorts lucrative, Rep. Antonio R. Floirendo Jr. (2nd district, Davao del Norte) continues to pursue and recommend the legal regulation of the "mushrooming of swimming destinations" in the island garden city of Samal and Talikud Island.

He said that although the responsibility of regulating beach resort operations fall within the ambit of responsibility of the mayor of Samal, "this concern should be supported by congress to hasten its implementation and strengthen its legal identity. That is why I am still pushing for House Bill 1745, to establish the authority that would implement recommendations that would monitor sustainable utilization of resources of the Davao Gulf area."

House Bill 1745, is an act proposed by Floirendo creating the Davao Gulf Development Authority to be tasked with the planning, coordination and management of all government programs in the Davao Gulf as well as maximizing the efficiency and hastening the development of the area and its surrounding environment.

The congressman cited some disadvantages that beach owners would face if all shoreline properties are being developed into resorts without prior study, instead of finding other productive but sustainable ways of utilizing them as money-earning ventures.

Said Floirendo: "There are other productive ways, shoreline lands with deep insular shelves for example are better off as marina, jetty or docking site. Each move to transform and utilize an area should be studied to determine more appropriate structures and usage."

He also noted that while cultivating seafront into swimming areas is acceptable and legal, if they comply with procedural requirements, it is also the responsibility of the government to see to it that business remains competitive and productive because this would mean better income for operators and higher revenue for the government.

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Fitness

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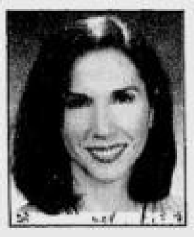
Motivation + plan of action = New Year's resolution success

ILLUSTRATIONS: JED ESTRADA

One needs to be 'psychologically aroused' about his health or looks to go from talking to doing

WELL AND GOOD



Tina Aboitiz Juan

IT'S the start of the year and New Year's resolutions can't be far behind, especially resolutions to get fit. Even people who haven't thought about fitness for the last six months start to think about getting in shape when January rolls around. This is because the last couple of weeks of the Christmas season are usually weeks of excessive eating and drinking. You want to wipe your slate clean and start fresh. On a deeper level, it is because the start of a new year brings hope that life will somehow be better than the last year. There is always that feeling that this is the year you will get your life under control.

People start the year with the best of intentions. "I am going to lose weight." "I am going to get fit." "I am going to exercise." If good intentions were all that were needed to achieve fitness resolutions, there would hardly be any unfit people left in the world. The sad truth is that the majority of people make the same resolutions regarding fitness year after year. The main reason for this unfortunate state of affairs is that becoming fit is not a one-shot deal. It requires a permanent change in lifestyle. And that is never easy.

To be successful, you need a strong enough source of motivation to "push" you to get started. Then you need a solid plan of action to turn that desire into reality. Aside from the initial motivation, you also need a continuing source of motivation to dip into when the going gets tough along the way. It's hard enough to get started; it's even tougher to maintain the new lifestyle.

Motivation to change

The initial motivation to change an unfit and unhealthy lifestyle into a fit and healthy one has to be dramatic enough to spur you to take action. Psychologist James Prochaska, author of "Changing for Good," says that you need to be "psychologically aroused" about your health or your looks to go from talking to doing. Other experts call this a SEE or "significantly emotional experience." Some people call it the "enough is enough" moment.

Whatever the experience, it has to hit you hard in a personal way. This means that the same event will not affect everyone the same way. For example, a relative in his 40s dies of a heart attack. Not everyone in your family will be emotionally affected enough to make a lifestyle change. Some members of your family might think, "That would never happen to me." You, on the other hand, might be hit hard and realize that your lifestyle and the lifestyle of your dead relative are similar and you just might be the next victim.

Other examples of a SEE are trying on a bathing suit in a dressing room with unflattering lights and mirrors, getting unfavorable results of your blood chemistry exam, your doctor telling you that you are a walking time bomb about to have a stroke or heart attack at any moment, almost collapsing as you struggle to climb several flights of stairs because the elevator is out of order, your husband or wife calling you fat, or realizing that you are now two clothes sizes larger than you were last year.

The motivation to inspire you to stick to your new lifestyle can be the camaraderie you enjoy with your workout friends, rewarding yourself with new clothes, reading about health and fitness, or taking up a sport you always wanted to try but were always too unfit to do so. It is important that you continuously motivate yourself because there will be times when you will be tempted to quit and go back to your old unhealthy habits.

Plan of action

Someone once said, "People don't plan to fail but fail to plan." Many people make this mistake. They have the desire to get fit but don't have a practical plan of how they intend to achieve their goal. The best plans are those that are written down. The act of writing helps you to think clearly and logically. Here are some questions that need to be addressed in your plan of action.

- What is your specific goal? Statements like "I want to get fit" or "I want to lose weight" just don't cut it. What kind of fit do you want to be? How much weight are you going to lose? Examples of specific goals are "I want to be fit enough to play singles tennis" or "I want to lose 10 pounds."
- Split your major goals into smaller ones so that you don't get discouraged. Instead of

MOTIVATION/ p.C4

Columnist Tina Aboitiz Juan wasn't always fit as a fiddle, if you can believe that. For more on our resident wellness expert, as our New Year's gift to her many readers and followers, turn to p.C4

IT'S BACK!
Nestle
New Year, New You!
Only One Wrapper to Win!
2
TEEN GIZMO
GRAND PRIZE:
(2) Philips Home Theater Entertainment System
43" TV with stand, DVD & VCD Players with amplifiers
CONSOLATION PRIZE:
(10) Nokia 8310 Cellphones
POLO
RAISINETS
Jellinets
ALMONETS
cream
Crispy
KIDDIE TOYS SNATCH
3
TOY KINGDOM
GRAND PRIZE:
(2) Grab-All-You-Can Shopping Spree up to P100,000 at Toy Kingdom w/ free 1-day accommodation & airfare
CONSOLATION PRIZE:
(20) Nintendo Game Boy Advance w/ light accessory
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FRUTIPS
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KNICK KNACKS
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Nestle and Goya chocolates and candies give you another chance to get what you've always wished for.
Exciting prizes will surely make you look and feel good this New Year!

MECHANICS OF THE "NESTLE NEW YEAR, NEW YOU" PROMOTION

HERE'S HOW:

1. Write your name, address, telephone number and signature on a piece of paper.
2. Attach this to a single wrapper, label, pouch or cap of any of the following Nestle or Goya products: Polo, Raisinets, Jellinets, Almonets, Goya Cream Bar, Goya Crispy Bar, Smarties, Frutips, Boom Boom, Knick Knacks, Milo Bar, Goya Kiddie Fun Bar, Goya Droplets & Wonka.
3. Drop your entries at the NESTLE NEW YEAR, NEW YOU drop boxes at designated Supermarkets and Groceries.
4. Or you may send your entries to any of the following:
   a) Goya, Inc., 23 M. Tuazon St., Parang Marikina City
   b) Nestle Philippines, Inc., 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City
   c) Or any Nestle office near you.
5. Promo is from January 1 - March 15, 2002.
6. Draw date is on April 5, 2002 and Cut off date is on March 15, 2002.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. All prizes are tax-free.
2. All prizes are not convertible to cash but transferable.
3. Prizes to be given away are as follows:

SHOWCASE	GRAND PRIZE	CONSOLATION PRIZE
Teen Gizmo	(2) Philips Home Theater Entertainment System	10 Nokia 8310 CellPhones
Kiddie Toys Snatch	(2) Grab All-You Can Shopping Spree at Toy Kingdom	20 Nintendo Game Boy Advance

4. Draw date is on the 5th of April 2002.
5. Entries will be drawn per showcase per region.
6. The first valid entry drawn in each showcase per region will be declared as the winner.
7. A winner can only win once per showcase. However, a person can also win in another showcase in the same draw.
8. Three-fourths of the wrapper, label, pouch or cap must be intact to qualify as an entry.
9. All raffle promotion winners will be notified via telegram, which will indicate how and where they may claim their prizes. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from the date of receipt of telegram shall be forfeited only upon approval of DOH-BFAD.
10. Winners must present any two valid identification papers among the following along with the original telegram of notice when claiming their prizes: Company ID, Birth Certificate, NBI Clearance, Passport, Marriage, Driver's license or SSS ID.
11. All prizes are transferable provided claimants present the following: Letter of authorization from winner, any two valid identification papers or IDs of winner, any two valid identification papers or IDs of claimant and original telegram sent by Goya, Inc.
12. Prizes are subject to availability. Should a stated prize be unavailable for whatsoever reason, Goya, Inc. reserves the right to substitute the prize with another of similar value as deemed suitable by Goya, Inc.
13. A winner for a particular region must be a resident of the area of coverage.
14. Winners can claim their prize at the nearest Nestle office on the date indicated in the telegram.
15. All winners will shoulder travel/transportation expenses incurred in the course of claiming their prize.
16. An authorized representative from the Bureau of Food and Drugs will be present to supervise the raffle draw.
17. Goya, Inc.'s decision in concurrence with the DOH-BFAD is deemed final.
18. Nestle and Goya reserve the right to publish the names and/or photographs of winners for advertising and publicity purposes. All winners will be notified by mail.
19. All employees of Goya, Inc., Nestle Philippines, Inc., its advertising and promotion agencies, its packaging supplier, their spouses and relatives up to the second degree of affinity or consanguinity are not qualified to join.

Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 0951 s. 2001

Street party out in the country

GLOBE Telecoms SVP Manny de los Santos and family

DESIGNS Ligna's Nicky de Lange and Family

THE PALMS Country Club gathered its members and friends together to celebrate what the club has to offer. In a few months, the impressive structure will open its doors to the best facilities, activities and services a world-class country club can offer.

Its recent street party, held right across the magnificent edifice, which is now 87 percent completed, imbibed a lot of the substance, which The Palms promises to deliver to its members.

Starting off with a personalized Mass attended by Gotianun patriarch Andrew Sr. and wife Mercedes, the party blossomed into a night of music, laughter, joy and camaraderie.

Children and their parents walked the strip lined with food stalls as though in a fiesta carnival. Major sponsor San Miguel Corp. provided all the refreshments and beer, and Ralph's Wines & Spirits served wine spritzers and flavored vodka for members to enjoy.

Members mingled, cajoled and welcomed the holiday season as they listened to the magical voices of the Woodrose Grade 3 Carolers, The Trumpets and the celebrated UP Singing Ambassadors and danced to the music of Time-and-a-Half.

The event also marked the introduction of newly appointed general manager Graham Kiy.

The grand raffle prizes were a South Sea pearl pendant from Jewelmer International, trips to Boracay and Cebu courtesy of Proof International Travel Care and an all-expense-paid trip to the El Nido Lagen Resort.

Members did not go home empty-handed as children were treated to cash vouchers from Enchanted Kingdom and each family went home with a bottle of Borges Olive Oil.

ANDREW Gotianun Sr. with grandson Alex

THE WOODROSE Grade 3 Christmas Carolers

THE PALMS general manager Graham Kiy with the membership team: (from left) Macon Dejan, Reena Ayuyao, Donna Ochoa, Ed Sonoy, Michelle Tuason and Joy Lagdameo

GERRY Ablaza, NTC commissioner Eliseo Rio, lawyer Rudy Salalima, lawyer Froi Castelo and Remy Castelo

Celebration of music and friendship

GLOBE concluded its "Celebr8: A Globe Get-together" series on Studio 23 with a show. The final episode, dubbed "A Cellphonic Christmas," featured a cast of some of the Philippines' most talented performers and musicians. JM Rodriguez, Tricia Chiongbian, Amanda Griffin and RJ Rosales hosted.

Directed by Ryan Cayabyab, the show presented "Carol of the Bells," the Cellphonic Suite Overture. The rousing performance was soon followed by Kuh Ledesma's rendition of "The Christmas Song." The Company brought to life many well-loved Christmas tunes in "A Christmas Medley."

Fresh from headlining the Philippine Philharmonic's "Il Travatore," soprano Rachelle Gerodias sang "Music of the Night" while another "Il Travatore" cast member Lemuel de la Cruz joined Acoustic Jive lead singer May Bayot in "There Must be an Angel." The segment ended with the Philippine Madrigal Singers' rendition of "Circle of Life" and "Yannis Aria."

In a Pavarotti-inspired segment, theater veteran Robert Seña performed Puccini's "Nessun Dorma" and "O Sole Mio" with rock band Wolfgang's lead singer Basti Artadi joining the latter.

Gary Valenciano joined in the Christmas merrymaking, together with his children. Gabriel and Keana Valenciano entertained the audience with their dad with "Once Again It's Christmas," "Let's Hear it For the Boy" and "We are the Reason."

In between segments, Cayabyab presented "A Digital Day in the Life of Maestro Ryan Cayabyab," a special feature on how today's latest communication technology breakthroughs are affecting our lives. He also led a group of Center for Education Excellence (Centex) kids in "A Christmas Medley." Centex provides free education to deserving public school students.

"Celebr8: A Globe Get-together" is Globe's way of strengthening ties with its most valued subscribers. Through this five-part TV special, Globe has launched the biggest text-based promo via "Text Away to Getaway" where subscribers had the chance of winning over 40 million in prizes.

FATHER and daughter Gary and Keana Valenciano sing "Once Again It's Christmas."

THE COMPANY sing a Christmas medley.

CHEERS! Amado del Rosario, Prestige Cars Makati VP for sales; Gina Vargiu, Elizabeth Csurgai; Richie Primicias, BMW corporate communications manager; Gabor Csurgai, BMW Phils. service director, and Dr. Jeorg Breuer, BMW Phils. sales and marketing director

Car company with VIP initials now in RP

THE BMW Group recently introduced its local subsidiary, BMW Philippines Corp. in the grand manner that only a company bred in luxury, elegance and perfection can.

Festivities actually began early for the company's top management, starting with a courtesy call to President Macapagal-Arroyo. The day's frenzy of activities led to the exclusive reception at the Makati Shangri-La's Rizal Ballroom.

The power crowd included former President Fidel V. Ramos, Ambassador Herbert Jess of Germany, Rep. Teddy Boy Locsin and wife Louie, Rep. Harry Angping, FBDC's Charlie Rufino, Sun Life of Canada's Esther Tan and Antonio Go of Equitable-PCI Bank. Presidential daughter Luli Arroyo also made a quick appearance.

BMW has already introduced some 11 models and variants to the local market since April. The company has managed to increase its local sales by an astounding 82 percent.

Guests were immediately given an idea of the quality and craftsmanship that goes into every BMW vehicle, since selected models from the 3, 5 and 7 series were prominently displayed in the Shangri-La's main driveway, and even in the lobby itself. An obvious crowd favorite was the sporty and sexy Z8, which made a rare appearance being the only one of its kind in the country.

All activities in the ballroom soon came to a halt when the massive high-tech video screens presented an audiovisual display of the BMW lifestyle. Vernie Varga then regaled the crowd with ballads, including the classic "Follow Your Road," which everyone agreed was entirely appropriate for the evening's theme.

Amid a spectacular display of lights and sounds, Dr. Jeorg Breuer, BMW Phils. sales and marketing director, made the most dramatic entrance of all, by driving the sparkling 735iA into the center of the ballroom to the delight of the guests.

BMW president Mark Gilbert chats with former President Fidel V. Ramos and a guest.

GERMAN Ambassador Herbert Jess is all smiles at the helm of the BMW 7 Series.

NILO Cruz, Compaq Computer president; Ramon Dimacali, IBM chair; Helen Macasaet and Mel Festejo, Nextel president

Silver and steamy

IT was a ticklish, steamy and absolutely sexy Remy Silver zodiac party recently, as Dish at Rockwell served everyone a spicy treat.

Celebrators like broadcaster Cutie del Mar, TV host and model Lexie Schulze, dapper disco pioneer Louie Ysmael, Dish's main men Cary Lopez and Rikki Dee, Luna's Vanna Calalang, Gina Godinez, Margarita Locsin, eventual winners Dindo de Villa of Maxxium Phils. and Elizabeth Go gamely went through naughty props like handcuffs, whips, cherries, chocolate syrups, strawberries, even some kinky costumes to vie for treats and goodies.

Celebrators and motley party revelers tried to cool the heat from the wicked games with what turned out to be the perfect new spirit for the evening: the crowd favorite, Remy Silver, from the makers of the world's favorite cognac Remy Martin VSOP and XO.

Randy Uson, senior product manager of Maxxium Philippines, exclusive distributor of Remy Silver describes it as "fusing the warmth of cognac with vodka's sensual coolness."

Martin Nievera, who jammed with the band Puro Ritmo, Cecile Ysmael, Sen. Serge Osmeña with wife Bettina, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, Alex Lichaytoo of Biltmore on Greenbelt, EJ Litton, Philip Cu-Unjieng, Bong Palma-Gil, Bembol Roco, Jones Sales, Bing Morelos, Marvin Agustin and Smokey Manaloto were only some of the many who trooped to soak in the steamy ambiance of the sizzling zodiac party. Amid raised glasses, the crowd cooled down the thermal heat generated with Remy Silver's smooth, sexy and mellow smoothness, and grooved to the swinging ambiance of Dish.

BENG Dee, Annette Sumulong and Robina Gokongwei-Pe

SEN. Serge Osmeña III and wife Bettina

VINA Bello, Thelina Nuval, Martin Nievera, Cecile Ysmael and Patricia Cu-Unjieng

JEFFREY Hidalgo, Marc Nelson, CJ Jaravata, Cutie del Mar, Marvin Agustin and friends

Self-improvement begins with new awareness

BY ERNESTO K. MAGTOTO
Contributor

OUR tradition is to examine ourselves at the end of a year for self-improvement. But to do the task well, we must remind ourselves that a truly meaningful change comes only when we dare to do more than an ordinary search. We must go deep and accept what we find there.

What we will find, if we really dig deeper, is what can be considered a repeat of historical mistakes, a "chain of broken promises." Perhaps our failure took place in that part of us called "awareness," which remains weak because of an imbalance in our being or consciousness.

This condition is best explained by the fact that although we are both mind and spirit, our spiritual level of being has weakened because we have accustomed ourselves to living exclusively in the mental. Thus, our state of unawareness.

Different things

Can that happen to one who is religious? It can and it does happen because religiosity isn't what makes one spiritual—in fact, they are two different things, as we will find out.

Our manner of religiosity is just a mental exercise. We keep in step with rules or obligations, the dogmas and rituals, thus making our behavior mechanical. We also seem to observe tradition merely to ease our feelings of guilt for the wrongs we make because of self-delusion. It is common knowledge that the illusions we create because of selfishness make a mockery of what is true.

Of course, no one wants to be at the receiving end of deception. But we are often unaware of what is real and true because we have our own delusions about things. Thus we fail to make any significant difference in our attempts at self-improvement. We may succeed externally but not where it matters most—inside.

The fact is we are weakened by selfishness. The world is full of injustice because of deceptions caused by selfishness. Ever since Adam and Eve succumbed to the temptation of interpreting reality the way they wanted to—which is what eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge signified—humankind has had to suffer the consequence of their action by living in a state of unawarenesss, corruptibility and pain.

Simply put, our problems continue because we have not learned to open our own eyes. For instance, we persist in the false notion that the rational mind has all the truths at its beck and call. Our mentally aggressive sojourns into political, economic, scientific and religious theories and ideologies have merely resulted in prejudices, differences and conflicts.

Lies as truths

We have not progressed spiritually as fast as we have mentally because we take false notions as though they are truths. The most obvious is our belief in the need to be aggressive. We say it is the secret to success in life. What is worrisome is that this belief has been handed down from generation to generation that we are not even alarmed by the prospect of our children committing the same mistakes that have pockmarked history since time began.

Shall we do something to start a change in our collective consciousness? Let us do so, not through the standard methods, traditional formulas or rituals that we have mastered but through an inner process that will enhance our awareness.

We have many reasons for adopting the process: we want to stop the aggressively strong from violating the rights of the weak; we want the conflicts, inequalities and wars to be resolved through an understanding of our weaknesses; we want to demolish the deceptions put up by the bribed to protect those who bribed them and themselves as accessories to the misdeed; we want to stop the tradition of handing down beliefs without separating the myth from the real. Unless we look closely at what caused the imbalances in our consciousness, we won't even know where to begin to solve our problems.

Habit of denial

Selfishness has caused the dissipation of our awareness besides creating the conflicts in human relationships. The fact that denial has become a sickening habit shows that we are in a difficult battle against egoistic selfishness, which can only be won through self-confrontation. We must admit that we have not really gone deeper than the superficiality of rushed promises, which New Year resolutions are.

If we ask ourselves why we find it difficult to be spiritual, we will realize it is because we have accustomed ourselves to living exclusively in the mental. That is the reason we do not understand that "trying to be good" (religiosity) pales in comparison with the reality of "being good" (spirituality)—we have persisted in the former and not bothered to know the latter. Why we have not bothered to do so is because the ego that rules the mental has been deceiving us.

We have not been aware that both good and evil lie within us—as do truth and illusion. We are unable to make a distinction between right and wrong. That is what awareness or intelligence is all about. All our mental ideas, fixed conclusions or prejudices will melt away when we regain our lost sense of right and wrong. We have to accept the truth that the mind and its concepts are hampered by their limitations.

True understanding, a spiritual process, has nothing at all to do with thinking. Intelligence comes only after we let go of our mental preferences, desires or ambitions. Put another way, if our mental formulas have failed to bring peace and goodwill to societies, it is because we are unaware that thought merely engages us in the preferential tendencies of the ego.

> Unaware of what is real and true because of our delusions about things, we fail to make any significant difference in our attempts at self-improvement

If we must give up what we have believed in for so long, what then can we hold on to?

The truth is one doesn't need to hold on to anything material or conceptual. If we see where our weakness lies, the way to overcome that weakness will present itself at the blooming of our awareness. Corruption will be averted when we accept that discarding the unessential—the illusion—will free the mind. When that happens, a higher level of consciousness will be reached where what is real and true will be seen.

The purging starts in watching the ego from a safe distance. This helps us identify the self with the soul. It is this rising from the mental to the spiritual—an inner knowing rather than mere thinking—which will effect the emptying of the mind.

It is the emptiness or unburdened state of sincere humility that will bring about the inner motion that change requires.

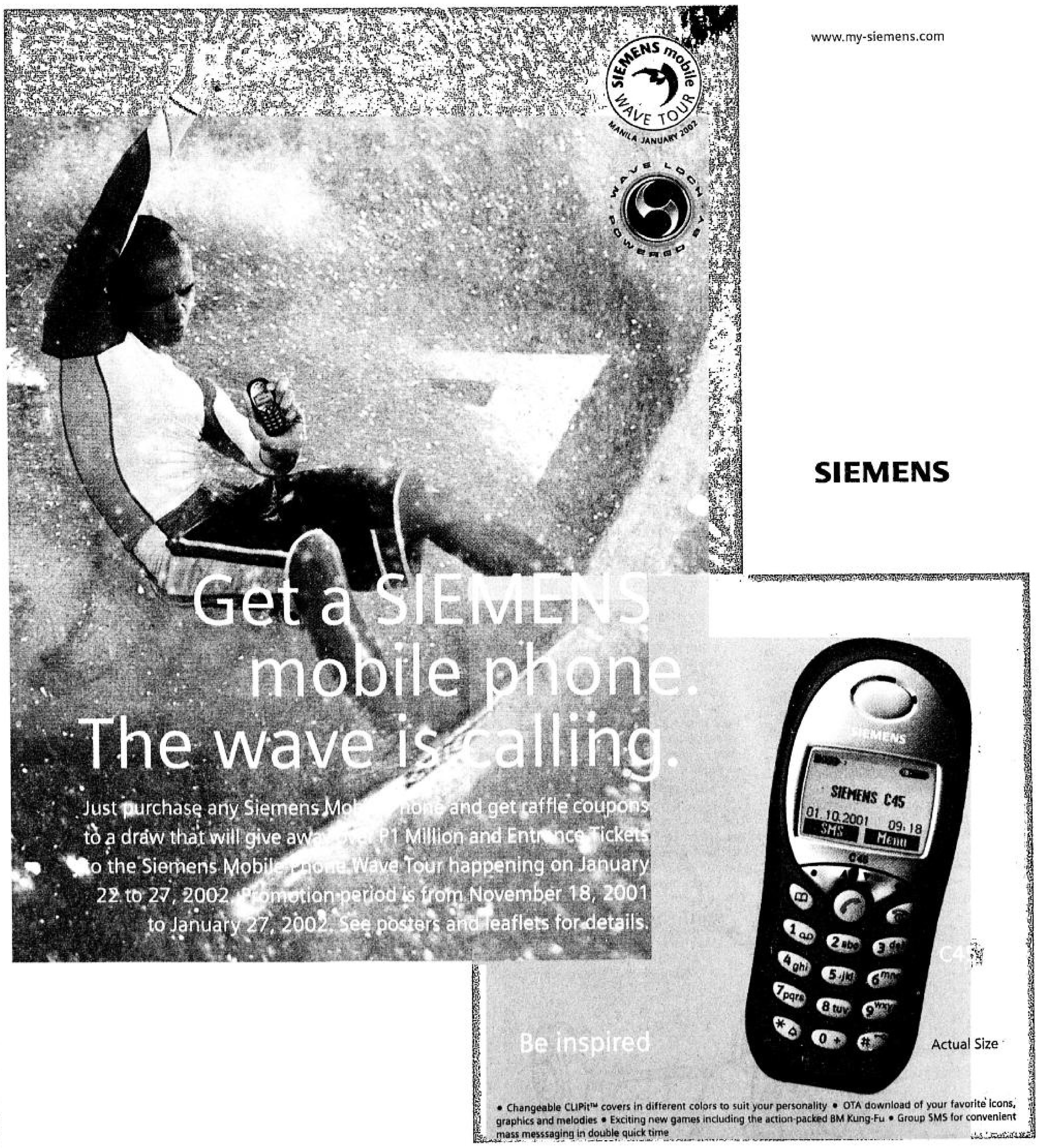
ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

"Yeah right... relationships that ended and made me feel so miserable... so used... so empty..."

Garlic-mouthed Marissa, played by Dina Bonnevie, lectures everyone on relationships but ironically can't even manage her own.

A film by Laurice Guillen

American Adobo
Lutong New York. Lasang Pinoy.
OPENS ON JANUARY 16



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Per DTI-NCA Permit No. 3858, series of 2001

Empress of exercise

By Alex Y. Vergara

THE START of a year heralds renewed hope even among weight watchers struggling to lose those unwanted pounds but have yet to score a decisive victory in the battle of the bulge.

But before you start working out like crazy or depriving yourself of the necessary nutrients after gorging on such holiday treats as *lechon*, potato salad, fruitcake and *leche flan*, it pays to know that everything must be done in moderation for a fitness program to work. Losing weight and keeping it off permanently requires ample time as well as discipline.

These tips may sound old hat even to a couch potato. Surprisingly, however, even fitness guru and PDI Lifestyle columnist Tina Aboitiz Juan had also been clueless as she struggled to manage her weight problems years ago.

Fluctuating weight

Tina's journey to a fit and healthy lifestyle was waylaid for a time by fad diets, diet pills and marathon exercises that left her drained. Because of poor eating habits, her weight fluctuated like crazy even before yo-yo dieting had become part of the fitness buff's lexicon.

Tina was way ahead of her time, but for the wrong reasons. She even tried Ionamin and Pondamin, better known these days by their respective generic names Fenflorumin and Phentermin (yes, the notorious Fen-Phen!), long before such diet drugs were deemed hazardous to one's health especially if taken together. If it was any consolation, Tina took them separately.

Who knows? Had there been Bangkok pills then, Tina would have probably been one of the first to try the *artista*'s diet drug of choice. How did it come to this?

"I was thin as a child," she says. "Then I started to balloon soon after I reached puberty." Tina, who stands 5 feet, was anything but curvaceous during those days. By the time she finished high school, she was 20 pounds overweight. Alarmed and bewildered at the sudden changes in her body, she soon developed a negative self-image that burdened her even after she left her native Davao to pursue college in Manila. To make matters worse, it was her first time to leave home and stay with an aunt. Such drastic changes were simply too much for a country girl to take.

As a psychology student at St. Scholastica's College, Tina tried to lose those excess pounds through various forms of dieting and exercise. Unfortunately, such manic attempts proved futile since she always found an excuse to binge later, especially when feeling angry or depressed. And that happened quite often.

Bingeing and purging

"Deprivation and excessive exercise had a boomerang effect," she explains. For three years, Tina endured a cycle of bingeing and purging that reached alarming levels during her freshman year.

"I used food to cope with life," she shares. "It became such an addiction. That's why I understand now why food is called the 'good' girl's drug. It's legal and readily available."

Indeed, it didn't help that a grocery store was a stone's throw from her aunt's house. "I would stuff my bag with all sorts of snacks and devour them as soon as I got home," Tina recalls. There was a time she could finish a box of sweet, calorie-laden cinnamon rolls in one sitting. Of course, such grotesque snacking took place behind closed doors—in the privacy of her aunt's bathroom. "I was so ashamed of what I was doing to myself that I kept it a secret even to my closest friends."

She fooled no one but herself. Tina felt guilty as hell soon after every bingeing episode that it was only a matter of time before she became a certified bulimic, inducing herself to vomit in a vain attempt to rid herself of the guilt and excess calories. That was more than a decade before such disorders as bulimia and anorexia became household words at the expense of such tragic poster girls as Princess Diana and singer Karen Carpenter.

Starting afresh

Her parents noticed something was troubling her although they couldn't pinpoint exactly what it was. It was their timely intervention that eventually saved her from sinking deeper into an "emotional crisis." Tina saw psychiatrist Dr. Lourdes Lapuz for a year, and experienced a turning point.

"What that hell was I doing to myself? I eventually learned to love myself and started focusing on making myself healthy." Tina started afresh by buying a good, no-nonsense nutrition book and doing yoga. She also became a vegetarian for a time. She eventually moved to the University of the Philippines in Diliman where she took up biology—and discovered and honed her talent for teaching.

"I first started organizing exercise classes among friends and roommates at UP," she says. "I enjoyed teaching, but I really wanted to become a doctor. Never did I imagine myself making a career out of it (fitness)."

Tina finished her premed course, but she had to say goodbye to her dreams of becoming a doctor in favor of marriage. At 21, she married Domingo "Ming" Juan of Bacolod. They have two children, Caterina, 21, and Miguel, 18.

"Even now, I still call myself a doctor," the frustrated *doctora* quips whenever she sees former UP classmates, "but one on preventive medicine."

Except for a time after giving birth to Miguel, Tina's determination to stay fit didn't wane even with marriage. She credits Cebu-based businesswoman and fitness expert Lita Quisumbing for introducing her to scientific approaches to fitness. Quisumbing is probably the first Filipino to be trained by American Cathy Davis, president of the world's largest association of fitness professionals.

"It was Lita who inspired me to share my knowledge with others," says Tina. Quisumbing encouraged Tina to open her own gym rather than teach at someone else's.

When they finally moved to Manila in the late '80s, Tina turned her basement into a mini gym where she held fitness classes for friends and neighbors. Both teacher and students thoroughly enjoyed the experience that both sides of the street fronting the Juan home was soon lined with cars. Tina knew she soon had to move to a bigger, more accessible location. It so happened that the Alabang Town Center was then undergoing construction.

Thanks to her supportive husband, Tina soon began training abroad to prepare herself for the new task ahead. "He encouraged me to train and get certified in the United States. We stayed there for a few months and he would even cook for us because I'm not very good in the kitchen."

It was during one of those sessions that she met Filipino colleagues Madonna Paras and Cynthia Carreon. They struck up a friendship and decided upon their return home to form a nonprofit organization designed to promote education among Philippine-based fitness professionals. Thus, the Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines was born. Aside from being one of its founding members, Tina is AFPP's current secretary.

Tina Aboitiz Juan's daily morning classes at the Alabang branch of Fitness Advantage gives her a good reason to get out of bed and exercise with her students. A believer in the benefits of cross training, she teaches a different discipline—from aerobics, to yoga, to taebo, to Pilates—each day of the week

FIT AS A FIDDLE. Fitness maven Tina Aboitiz Juan relaxes at home. ROGER MARGALLO

From then on, Tina has traveled annually to train and pass a series of physical and practical exams to get certified by such reputable organizations as the American Council on Exercise and the American College of Sports Medicine.

"Not everyone is privileged to travel and learn abroad like us," she reasons. "So we felt the need to share our knowledge and experience with Filipino colleagues." Their responsibility includes inviting foreigners to come to the country to conduct seminars at subsidized rates. Aside from writing a weekly column, Tina also hosts a two-minute segment on fitness in "Alas Singko y Medya," a daily morning show on Channel 2.

Advantage

Soon after coming back from the US sometime in 1989, Tina opened her first gym at the Alabang Town Center called Fitness Advantage. Again, Tina, who would much rather teach than run a business, sought Ming, then a commodities trader, for help. He eventually set up a Fitness Design, a separate company that exclusively distributes Cybex fitness equipment locally. Meanwhile, Fitness Advantage has established a nationwide presence by opening branches in Cebu and, of course, Davao.

These days, Tina conducts daily morning classes at the Alabang branch. She takes advantage of these hour-and-15-minute sessions to exercise with her students as well. "It gives me a good reason to get out of bed even if the urge to sleep is too strong," she says with a chuckle.

But no two days are alike. A believer in the benefits of cross training, Tina teaches a different discipline—from aerobics, to yoga, to taebo, to Pilates—each day of the week. She devotes an hour or so to weight training each week. Saturdays and Sundays are rest days.

And what drives Tina to go the extra mile apart from her lovely and supportive family? "The thought that I'm somehow able to influence the quality of other people's lives," she says. And such, well, exercises aren't purely for vanity's sake. "Everything you want to do in life has to be accomplished first in the physical realm."

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

Motivation + plan of action = New Year's resolution success

(From page C1)

concentrating on the 10 pounds you have to lose, focus on losing 2 pounds at a time. Accomplish playing doubles tennis first before attempting to play singles.

- What type of exercise will you do to achieve your goal? If your goal is firmer muscles, an aerobic-type activity like walking or cycling will not give you what you want.
- What days of the week will you exercise? What time? Be realistic about your schedule. You might be gung-ho right now about exercising early in the morning but if you have never gotten out of bed cheerfully and promptly in your life, guess how long you will stick to that exercise routine?
- Where will you exercise? If it is more than 15 minutes away, good luck! Chances are you will find it too inconvenient for you in a few weeks.
- Whose support will you need to be successful? Exercising after work in the gym beside your office might sound like a good idea now but if your husband or wife wants you home right after work, expect some unhappy arguments in the future making it all too easy for you to quit exercising.
- Support can also come in the form of a fitness instructor, nutritionist, video or book. This is especially important if you don't know the first thing about how to get fit and eat properly.
- How will you measure your success? If your goal is weight loss, will you do it by weighing yourself, taking your measurements to see how many inches you have lost, doing a body fat test, or judging how your clothes fit?

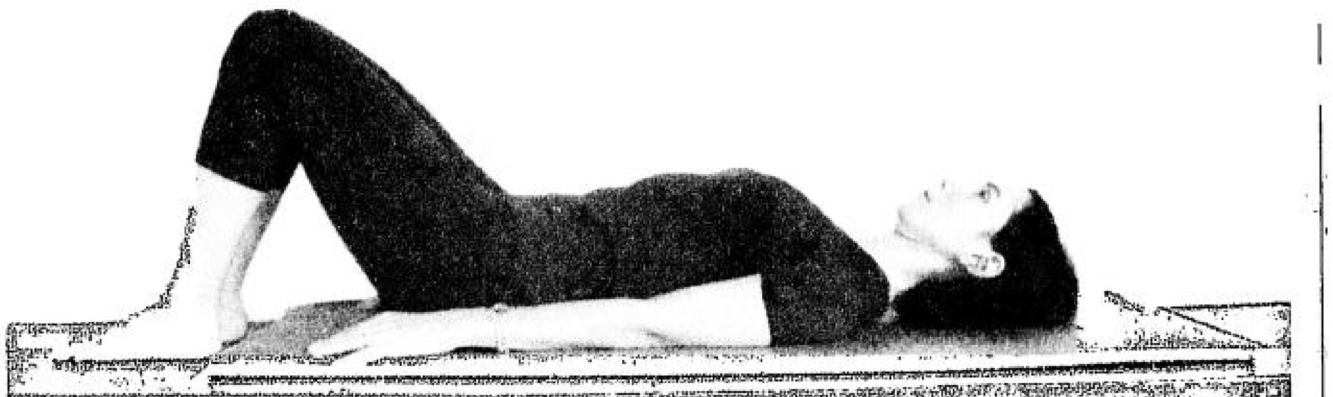
Be realistic about the results

If you have been as stationary as a rock for the last two decades, don't expect dramatic changes in six weeks or even six months. You will get the results you are looking for but it will take time.

Discouragement sets in when expectations are unfulfilled. The more realistic your expectations are, the more encouraged you will be by the results and the more you will be successful in making fitness a permanent part of your lifestyle.

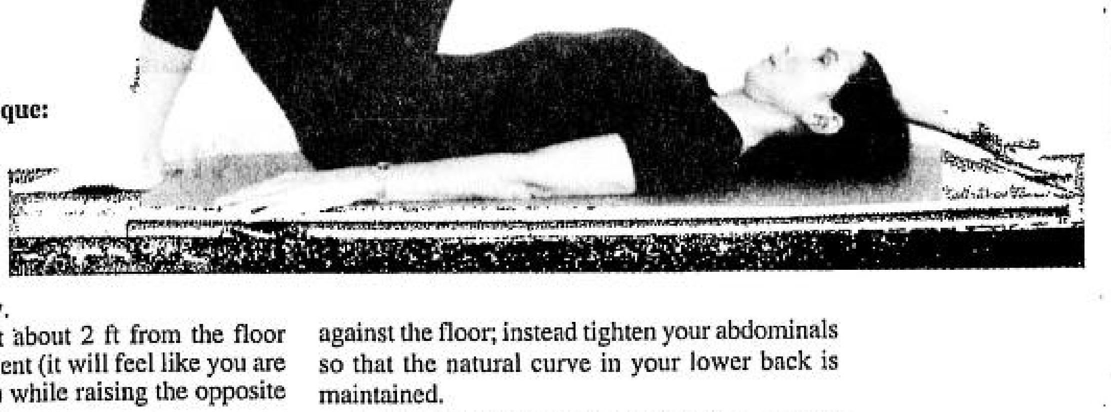
Visit www.tinajuanfitness.com

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



Supported 'dead bug'

THIS funny-sounding exercise (you supposedly look like a "dead bug" while doing the exercise) strengthens your abdominal muscles as well as the front of your hips/thighs and front of your shoulders.



Equipment:
Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet on the floor, arms relaxed at the sides of your body.
2. Lift one foot about 2 ft from the floor keeping the knee bent (it will feel like you are marching in place) while raising the opposite arm over your head.
3. Repeat in a continuous, slow, steady rhythm, alternating arms and legs.
4. You have completed one repetition when each side has been raised and lowered once.

Performance tips:

1. Do not allow your lower back to flatten against the floor; instead tighten your abdominals so that the natural curve in your lower back is maintained.
2. Move very slowly to get the full benefit of the exercise and to prevent injuring your lower back.

Repetitions:
Do 15 slow repetitions. Rest. Do one or two more sets.

CHING Bersola: "Beauty is not skin-deep."

Successful mom believes that beauty comes from within

CONCEPCION "Ching" Bersola personifies the expression "bundle of joy." No, it's been a long time since Ching was a baby. Rather, she is such a happy and joyful person.

Ching says she owes it to being successful, though not necessarily in the "traditional" sense. She defines success as "one that is never measured by material things." She adds that real happiness is "contentment and fulfillment that cannot be bought by money. It comes from not having extremely high expectations and by keeping things simple."

Not that Ching is an underachiever. In high school, she graduated class valedictorian and was the only one given the Leonció B. Monzon Gold Medal for academic excellence at MLQU. After earning a degree in educational psychology from the University of the East, graduating magna cum laude, she beefed up her credentials with a Master of Arts from the University of the Philippines. She then finished a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Sto. Tomas. She would have taken the bar exams but decided she wanted to concentrate on her family full-time.

Despite her hectic lifestyle, Ching has managed to be beautiful. She professes to be beauty-conscious, a trait influenced partly by her father Sotero who was fond of classic Hollywood celebrities. (Ching herself could have been a glamorous star had she not prioritized her studies.) Since she was in high school, she has been aware of the importance of looking lovely and presentable no matter where she's going. In fact, Ching "always brings a makeup kit. She even knows how to quickly put on makeup inside a moving car."

Skin care regimen

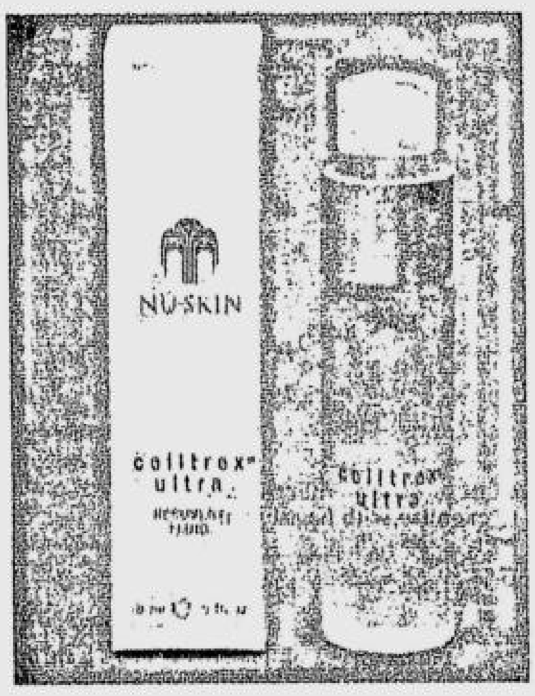
But Ching is aware that true beauty is not skin-deep. "Beauty comes from the inside," she stresses. "Self-confidence and happiness on the inside—as well as clean, healthy living—give you that glow, that radiance." Ching exercises regularly at home using a stationary bike and does stretches and bending routines for up to 30 minutes daily. She regularly takes vitamins C and E; does not drink nor smoke; constantly smiles; opts for seafood, veggies and fruits; rarely eats meat and says no to soda; and always finds quality time for herself and her family. Her friends say that Ching's strengths are her sense of humor, strong spirituality, being slow to anger and positive outlook. "These are traits I got from my mom," Ching relates.

Recently, Ching added the skin tablet called Imedeen to her beauty regimen. "I found out about it in magazines and newspapers," Ching relates, "and I've been taking it ever since it became available here." She says she was drawn to the internal skincare tablet because it helps delay the aging process. Many have noticed her supple skin. Absent are the dryness, unsightly lines and uneven skin that Imedeen helps prevent. And even though Ching has just turned 51, she looks young for her age.

Ching notes that her dermatologist recommended Imedeen. Indeed, the tablet goes hand in hand with her regular beauty regimen. Thus, she also recommends Imedeen to those who want to achieve "a youthful and glowing skin."

Clearly, Ching is a fulfilled woman. She is the mother of three children: 13-year-old Niño, who graduated valedictorian from Ateneo grade school; 29-year-old Charmaine, a psychology graduate of Assumption; and 31-year-old Christine, the TV personality who graduated cum laude from UP. Ching has guested on Christine's show "Talk TV" (for the episode on future in-laws) and on the "Mommy Ko'ng Da Best" portion of "Alas Singko y Medya." Besides being a homemaker, Ching is the owner and manager of a fashion boutique in Greenhills and travels regularly to other parts of Asia and Europe.

New product enhances healthy-looking skin



NU Skin, the personal care division of Nu Skin Enterprises, introduces Celltrex Ultra Recovery Fluid to bring the tissue-nurturing benefits of hydroxytyrosol to daily skin care.

Celltrex Ultra Recovery Fluid is part of the Nu Skin Nutricentials' approach to daily skin care. Dermatologists believe specific nutrients in regional diets contribute to healthy-looking and beautiful skin. Nu Skin's research has identified nutrients that can naturally enhance a healthy appearance when applied directly to the skin.

The main ingredient in Celltrex Ultra is hydroxytyrosol, a patented polyphenol found in Mediterranean extra virgin olive oil, which is widely recognized as a source of health for people of this region. When topically applied, hydroxytyrosol helps protect skin from external aggressors that can lead to low-grade (invisible) irritation and helps prevent ruddiness and acceleration of the aging process. Research proves that applying olive oil rich in hydroxytyrosol decreases the appearance of fine lines, minimizes pore size and increases skin radiance.

Call 689-0333.

The lure of sports couture

CONVERSE showcased its Athletic Originals and Action Sports footwear, apparel and accessories in a mall tour show dubbed "Converse Lifestyle."

Due to the overwhelming response by the public, Converse Lifestyle was staged in eight malls. This fashion event featured classic designs and up-to-date street and sports wear.

The Converse Lifestyle Fashion Show was held at SM Southmall, Robinsons Manila, Tutuban Center, SM North Edsa, SM Manila, Riverbanks Marikina, SM Fairview and Festival Mall.

Converse products are available at Converse Concept Shops in Filinvest Alabang, Tutuban Recto, Ali Mall Cubao, SM City Cebu and SM Iloilo.

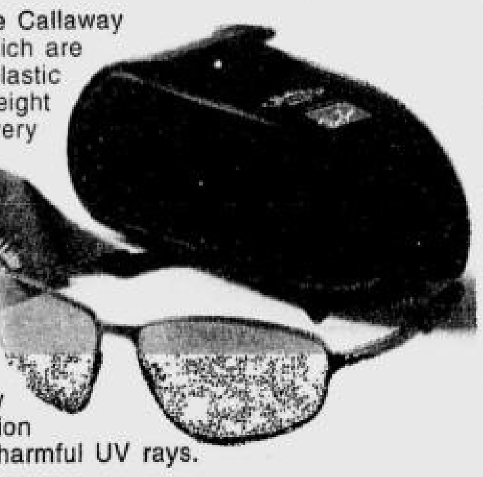
New, hip and exclusive

"TALK TV" hosts Julius Babao and Tin Tin Bersola display their Ray-Ban eyewear attitude.

OUT to make your eyewear shopping more convenient, Ray-Ban, the world's leading brand in fashionable and high technology eyeglasses, recently opened its first retail store at the Lifestyle Wing of the Powerplant Mall in Rockwell Center, Makati.

The store offers a complete range of Ray-Ban eyewear in shades and designs that will fit any personality and complement any mood. Ray-Ban's latest collection are worn by Hollywood leading celebrities—Tom Cruise, Cameron Diaz, John Travolta, Will Smith and many others. Ray-Ban's line of sunglasses also includes Killer Loop and Callaway Golf Collection. Killer Loop is an innovative brand of high-quality eyewear designed for the trendy set and built tough to withstand energetic lifestyle.

"ALAS Singko Y Medya" host Cheryl Cosim tries the latest eyewear collection from Ray-Ban.



RAY-BAN introduces the Callaway golf sunglasses, which are made of titanium and plastic frames that are lightweight and comfortable yet very durable. They come in basic violet shades and have a wraparound design for full coverage. More importantly, the Ray-Ban Callaway lenses offer protection against harmful UV rays.

Infocom Warpspeed triples your pleasure.

XXX

XXXtra hours promo...XXXtended until March 15,2002*...XXXtra access numbers

That's right! You have 3 more months to enjoy 7.5 hours from Infocom Warpspeed's P100 card. XXXperience Warpspeed's fast and reliable connections. Come and get it.

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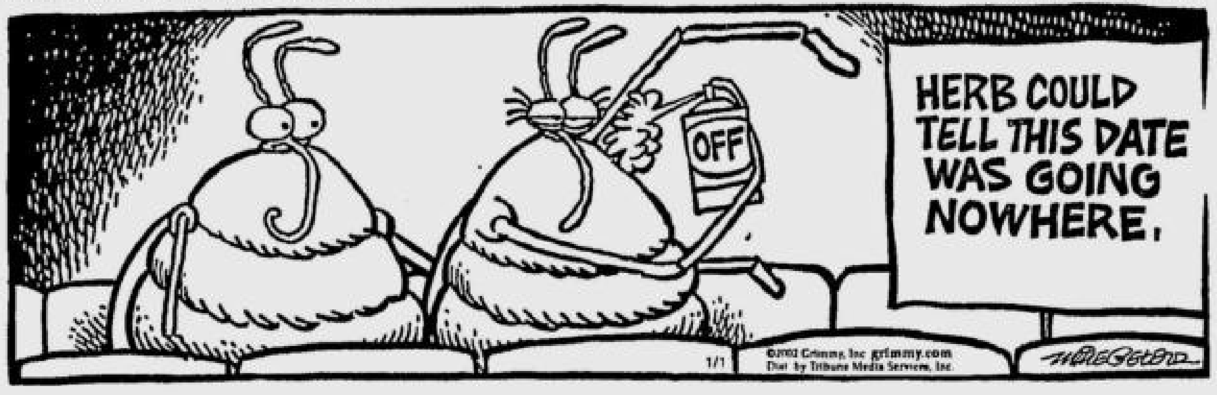
The high-powered choice

*first log on Customer Care Hotlines: 859-8000 (Manila); (032) 234-1845 (Cebu)

Per DTI-NCR Permit No 3524. Series of 2001.
www.speed.info.com.ph

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


OFF
HERB COULD TELL THIS DATE WAS GOING NOWHERE.
1/1
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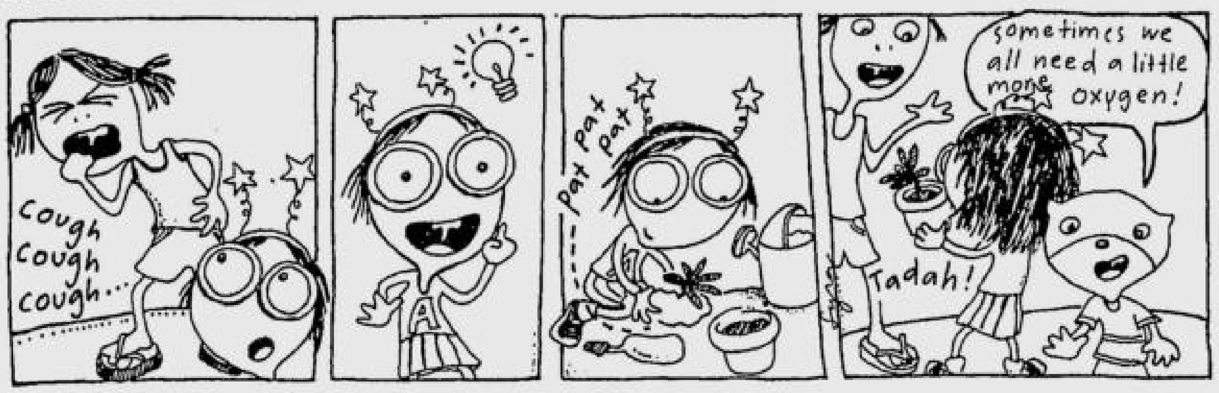
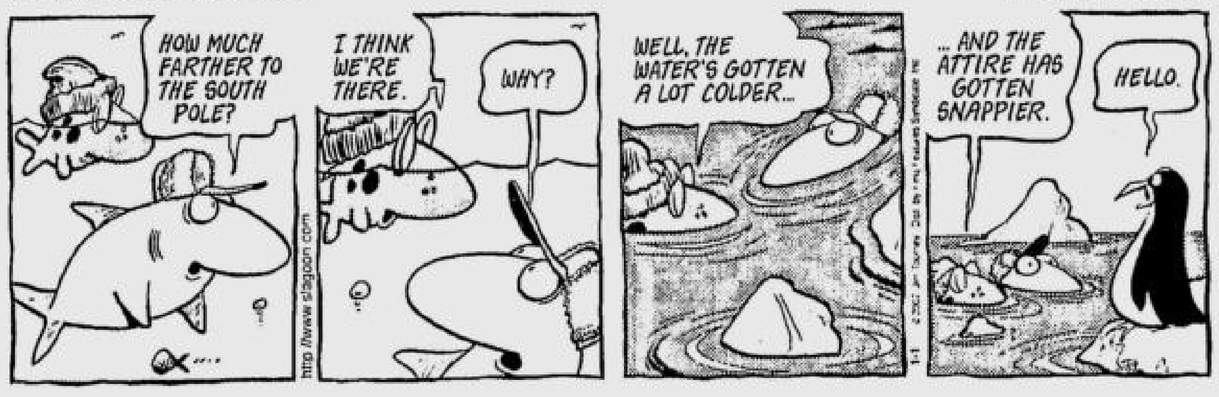
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Cough Cough cough...
pat pat pat
sometimes we all need a little more oxygen!
Tadah!

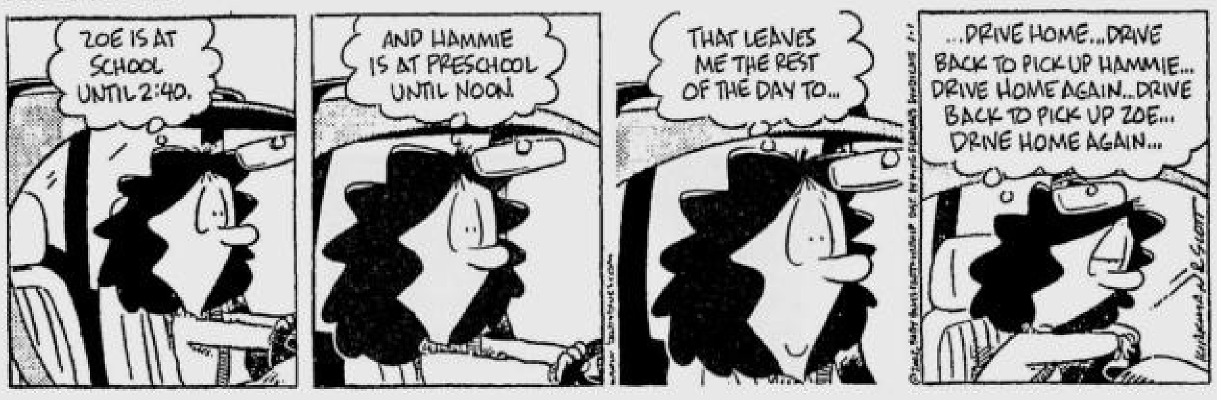
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


HOW MUCH FARTHER TO THE SOUTH POLE?
I THINK WE'RE THERE.
WHY?
WELL, THE WATER'S GOTTEN A LOT COLDER...
... AND THE ATTIRE HAS GOTTEN SNAPPIER.
HELLO.
http://www.slagoon.com

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ZOE IS AT SCHOOL UNTIL 2:40.
AND HAMMIE IS AT PRESCHOOL UNTIL NOON.
THAT LEAVES ME THE REST OF THE DAY TO...
...DRIVE HOME...DRIVE BACK TO PICK UP HAMMIE... DRIVE HOME AGAIN...DRIVE BACK TO PICK UP ZOE... DRIVE HOME AGAIN...

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Don Novello, J. D. Salinger, J. Edgar Hoover

Happy Birthday: Turn on the big push and get ready to work. Whatever you take on this year will bring you rewards. Just when you think you are about to lose you will be swept into the limelight and praised for your talents. Your numbers are 4, 7, 13, 24, 32, 36

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You will be able to help friends or relatives start the year off right if you share your experiences. Being kind to those having personal problems will ensure that you have a strong support system.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)): Someone is likely to mention something that you were trying to forget. Don't let it bother you. You will be praised for your mature attitude.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You need to take care of those personal letters and phone calls that you keep putting off. Start the year off properly and get ahead not further behind.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You will be inclined to overeat as well as overreact today. Uncertainty at a personal level may push you to make changes. Try to be patient and understanding.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Sit back, relax and enjoy all that you have. Being surrounded by good friends or relatives will be what will make you happiest today. This could be the start of a great year.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): If you know someone who is suffering, lend a helping hand or a kind word. Speak out about your ideas and your intentions. Make plans to follow your dreams and you will reach them.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Listen and observe what others want to accomplish this year and you will have a better idea regarding your own intentions. Don't make promises you can't keep.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You may have overspent lately. Do a quick check and make sure that you have enough to cover your bills. If you are quick to fix your financial future, things will be fine.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You will still be in a mood to travel and entertain. Make sure that you aren't just trying to evade issues that must be dealt with.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You may be enticed by someone you just met. Don't do something that you may regret. Instant romance will end just as fast as it began.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't just sit there. A new year has just begun, so get in gear and start to make plans. The better organized you are the more you will accomplish.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Be prepared to do for others. A good friend will need your assistance. Your kindness will be well received and repaid when you need a little help in return.

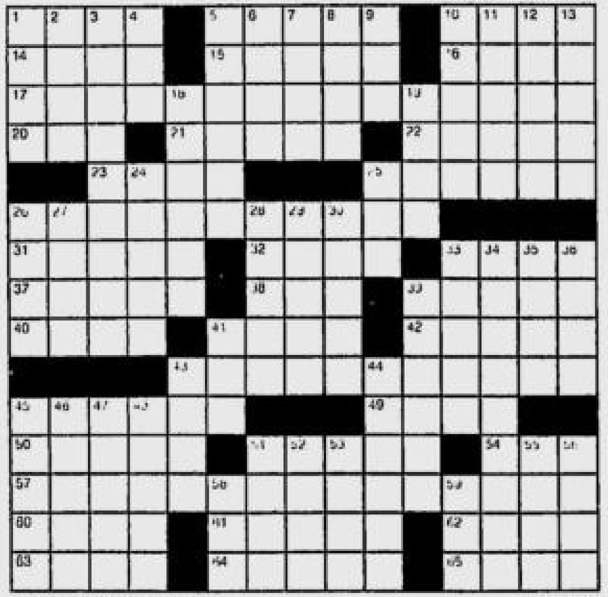
Birthday Baby: You are forever trying to attract attention and because of this you will always find yourself in the limelight. You have a sparkle that is hard for even your toughest competition to resist.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS
1 Schools of whales
5 Canadian tree
10 Greek sandwich
14 Intensely eager
15 Homeric epic
16 Director Nicolas
17 Scout
20 D.C. bigwig
21 Religious denominations
22 Vexation
23 Cold War foe
25 Perceives
26 Scout
31 Senior
32 Mars to the Greeks
33 Uffizi Palace display
37 Traction aid
38 Landed
39 Sharon of Israel
40 Hear me!
41 Equal
42 Apt to be bought?
43 Scout
45 Ready
49 Major or Minor constellation
50 Mazda model
51 Embers
54 Short haircut
57 Scout
60 Work gang
61 Change starter?
62 More than enough
63 Rowboat equipment
64 Molecule components
65 Blackthorn

DOWN
1 Kitchen utensils
2 S-shaped molding
3 Australia
4 One NCO
5 Distance runners
6 Actor Baldwin
7 Liquid measure
8 Crossers of longs.
9 Bradley and Begley
10 Wet behind the ears
11 Draft-animal ties
12 Superman portrayer
13 Fairy-tale monsters
18 Categorize
19 Fencer's foil
24 Chuck, e.g.
25 Former draft org.
26 Software support
27 __ podrida
28 More sound
29 Bay window
30 Kind of rocket
33 Locales
34 Sound familiar
35 Blue-green color
36 French she
39 Strongly disinclined
41 Colliers' workplace
43 Cogwheel
44 Sovereigns
45 Exxon rival
46 Zodiac scales
47 Surgical tool
48 Slumgullion and goulash
51 Penny
52 Italian eight
53 Throat-clearing sound
55 Melville's "Typee" sequel
56 Eight bits
58 By way of
59 Mil. installation



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
11/16/01

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	A	G	A	■	S	P	E	E	D	■	T	O	M	E
E	C	R	U	■	P	E	N	N	E	■	O	M	E	N
W	H	A	T	S	O	N	Y	O	U	R	M	I	N	D
S	E	M	O	L	I	N	A	■	C	A	C	T	U	S
■	■	■	C	A	L	■	■	B	E	T	A	■	■	■
L	A	R	R	Y	■	A	G	O	■	E	T	H	A	N
A	S	I	A	■	A	G	E	O	L	D	■	A	R	E
W	H	A	T	S	T	H	E	B	I	G	I	D	E	A
N	E	T	■	L	E	A	N	O	N	■	C	E	N	T
S	N	A	K	E	■	S	A	O	■	P	E	S	T	O
■	■	■	N	E	S	T	■	■	C	A	W	■	■	■
S	T	R	O	K	E	■	A	G	I	T	A	T	E	S
W	H	A	T	S	U	P	W	I	T	H	T	H	A	T
A	U	N	T	■	S	T	O	V	E	■	E	A	S	Y
T	S	K	S	■	S	A	L	E	S	■	R	I	T	E

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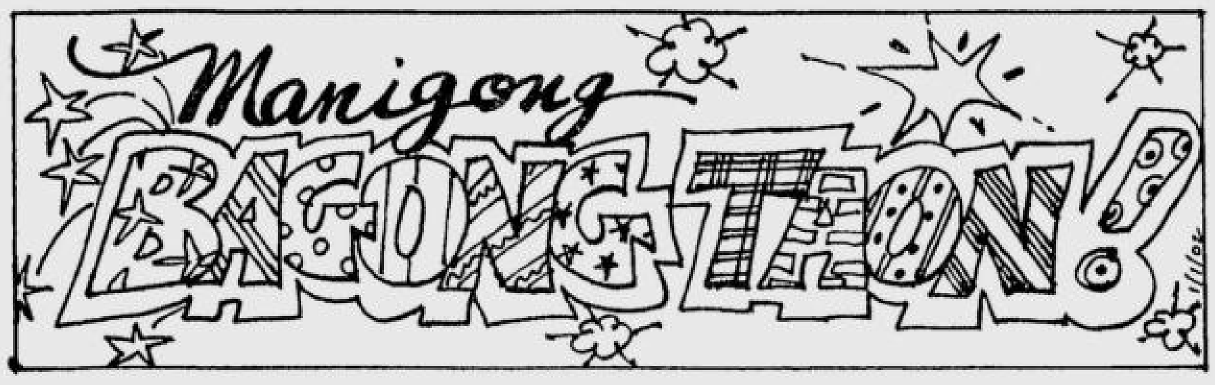
11/16/01

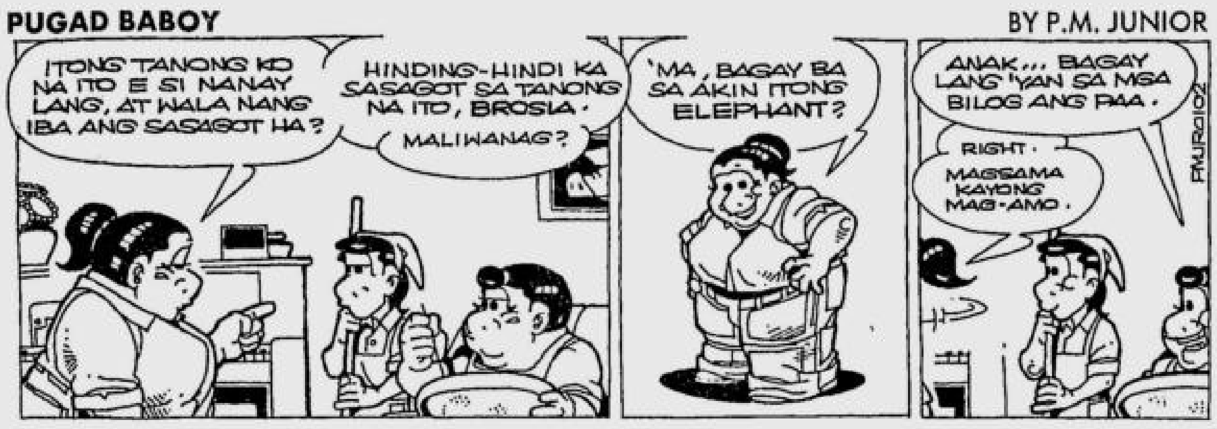
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


Manigong BAGONG TAON!

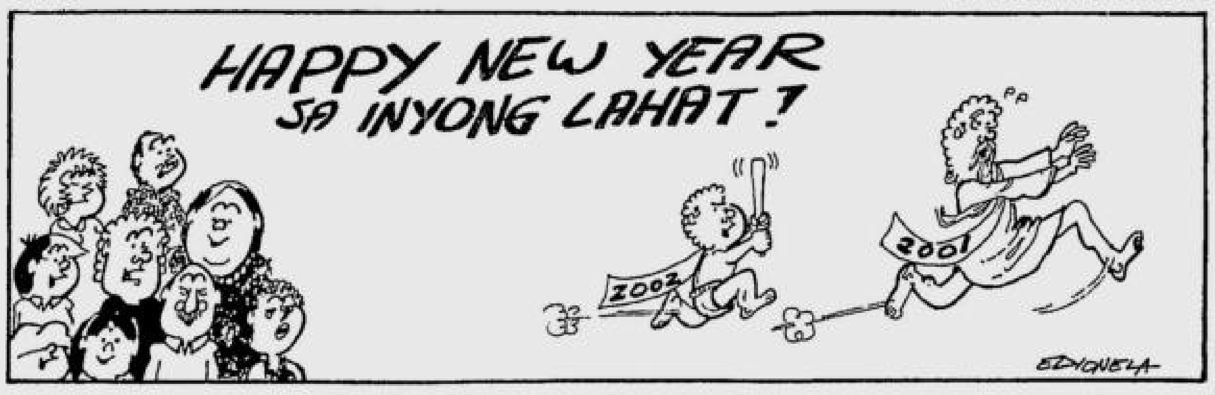
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ITONG TANONG KO NA ITO E SI NANAY LANG, AT WALA NANG IBA ANG SASAGOT HA?
HINDING-HINDI KA SASAGOT SA TANONG NA ITO, BROSIA.
MALIWANAG?
'MA, BAGAY BA SA AKIN ITONG ELEPHANT?
ANAK... BAGAY LANG 'YAN SA MGA BILOG ANG PAA.
RIGHT.
MAGSAMA KAYONG MAG-AMO.

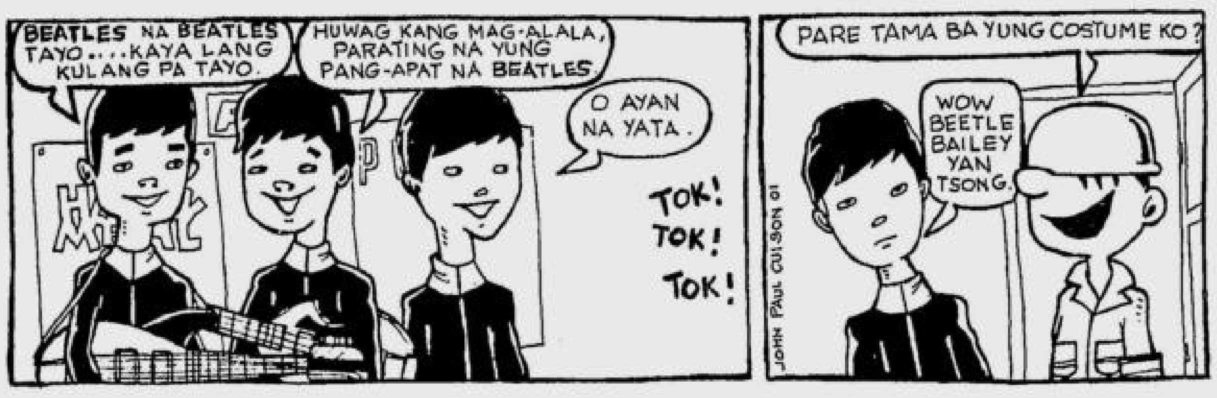
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


HAPPY NEW YEAR SA INYONG LAHAT!
2002
2001
EDIONELA

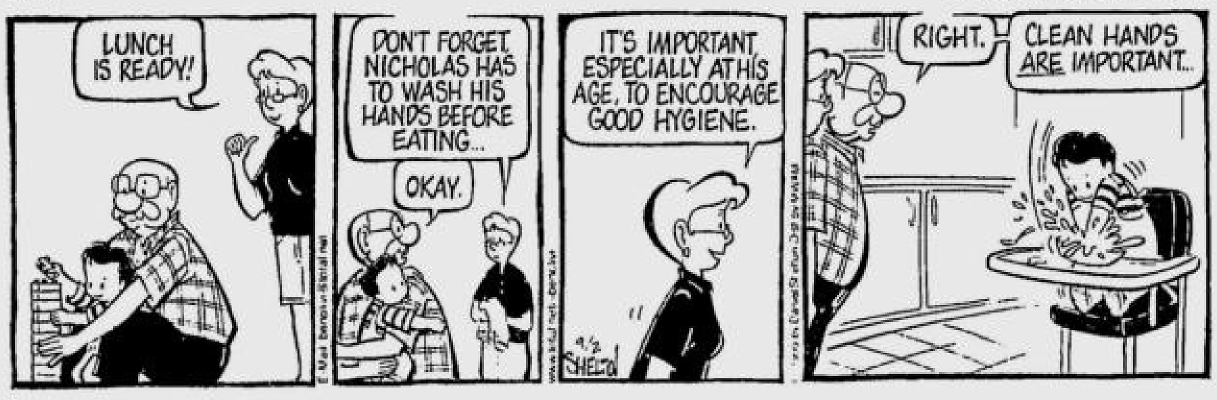
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


BEATLES NA BEATLES TAYO....KAYA LANG KULANG PA TAYO.
HUWAG KANG MAG-ALALA, PARATING NA YUNG PANG-APAT NA BEATLES.
O AYAN NA YATA.
TOK! TOK! TOK!
PARE TAMA BA YUNG COSTUME KO?
WOW BEETLE BAILEY YAN TSONG.
JOHN PAUL CUISON 01

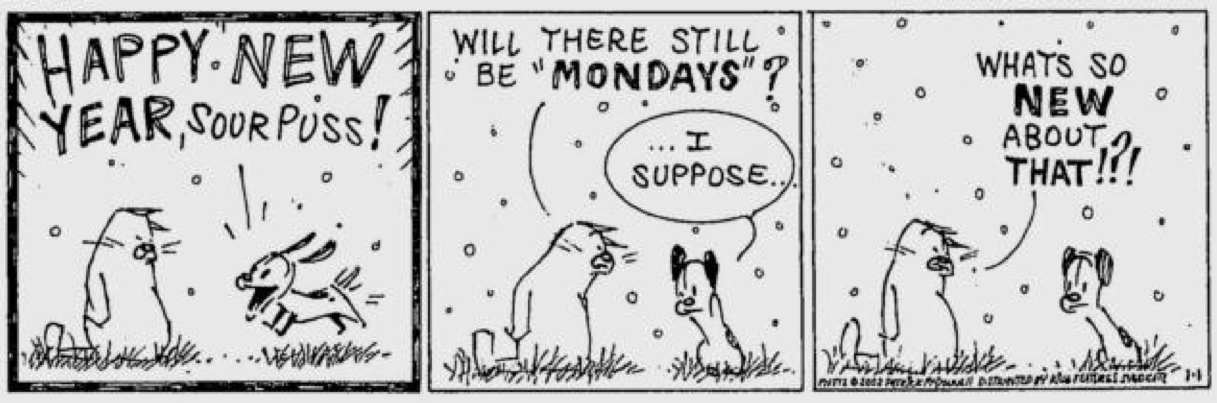
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


LUNCH IS READY!
DON'T FORGET, NICHOLAS HAS TO WASH HIS HANDS BEFORE EATING...
OKAY.
IT'S IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY AT HIS AGE, TO ENCOURAGE GOOD HYGIENE.
RIGHT.
CLEAN HANDS ARE IMPORTANT...

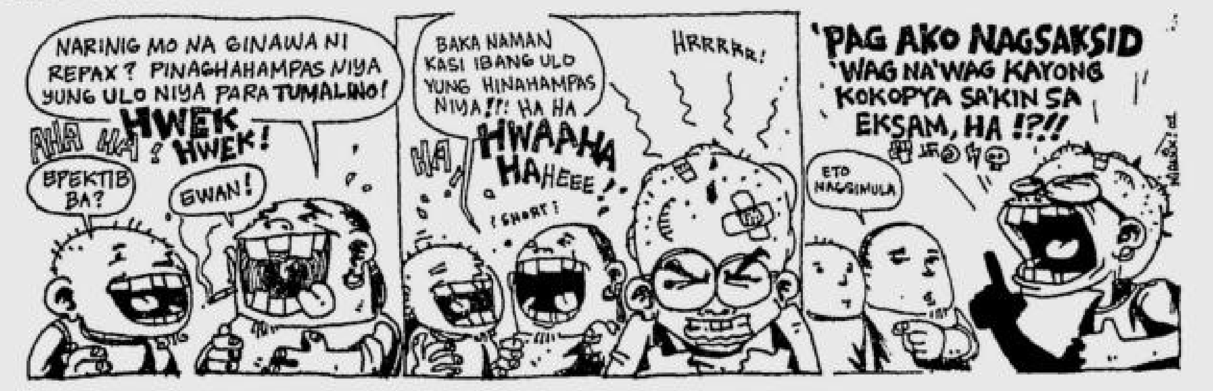
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HAPPY NEW YEAR, SOUR PUSS!
WILL THERE STILL BE "MONDAYS"?
... I SUPPOSE...
WHAT'S SO NEW ABOUT THAT!?!

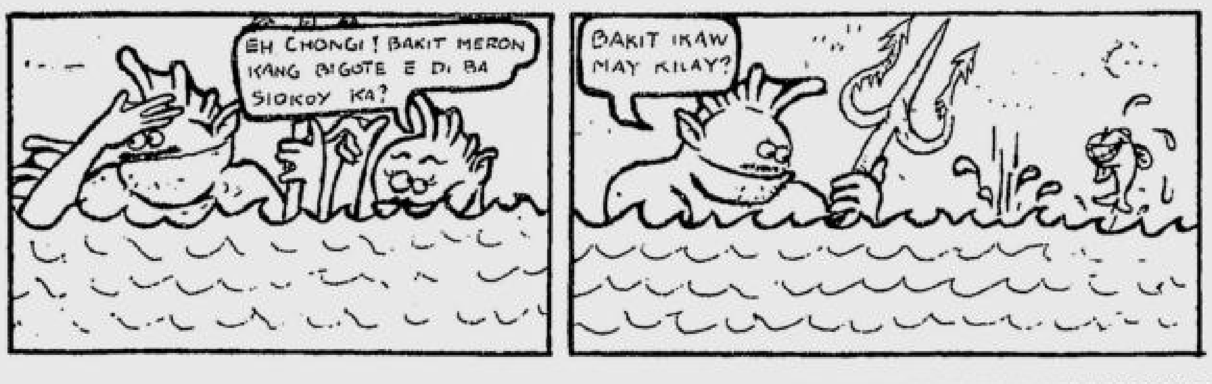
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


NARINIG MO NA GINAWA NI REPAX? PINAGHAHAMPAS NIYA YUNG ULO NIYA PARA TUMALINO!
AHA HA! HWEK HWEK!
EPEKTIB BA?
GWAN!
BAKA NAMAN KASI IBANG ULO YUNG HINAHAMPAS NIYA!?! HA HA
HA HWAAHA HAHEEE!
SNORT!
HRRRRR!
'PAG AKO NAGSAKSID 'WAG NA'WAG KAYONG KOKOPYA SA'KIN SA EKSAM, HA!?!!
ETO NAGSIMULA

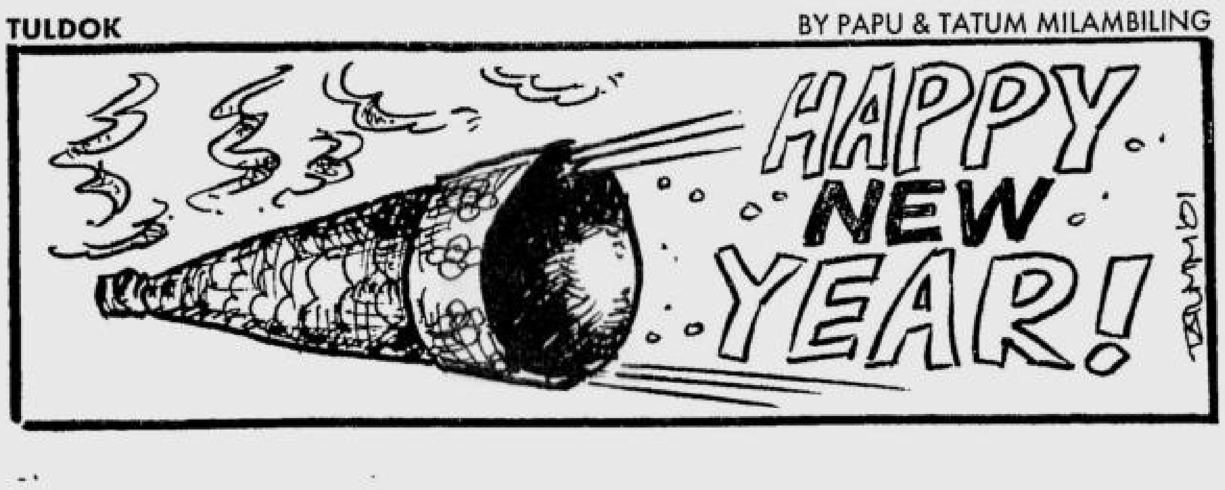
CHICHOY CHOKOY

BYIKOY RICIO


EH CHONG! BAKIT MERON KANG BIGOTE E DI BA SIOKOY KA?
BAKIT IKAW MAY KILAY?

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Mall holds final raffle Jan. 5

GOINGS-ON

HARRISON Plaza, Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils. and Rustan's Supermarket launched recently "Sarap ng Pasko sa HP Panalo" with the symbolic lighting of a Christmas tree at the Garden Square by Manila councilor Kim Atienza assisted by HP president Antonio V. Martel Jr., HP executive vice president Belen Lovina Ticzon-Martel, HP senior vice president Irene Francisco, Poly Avecilla, Coca-Cola export corporation area manager for Metro Manila, and Santa Claus.

The sales promo will run until Jan. 5, with the last raffle scheduled on Jan. 5 at the Garden Square.

Participating shoppers will be entitled to raffle coupons upon purchase of Coca-Cola products from any of the four booths managed by Rustan's Supermarket located at Mabini Wing, Adriatico Wing, Garden Square and HP Bargain Center of HP. Diners who will order combo meals served with Coke at the following food outlets will be entitled to raffle coupons as well. The beneficiary of a percentage of the proceeds from the joint promotion will be the Kabataang Inyong Maaasahan project of Atienza.

Present during the affair were Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and wife Beng, Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna and wife Inday, councilors Mitch Cuna, Cita Astals and Boy Isip; barangay chair Ludy Santiago, Roby and Melissa Martel with children Paolo, Nikki and Anton; Dr. Randy and Isabel Francisco, BMI president Benny and Ophie Clemente, Juliet L. Ticzon, Ina L. Ticzon, HP mall officers Danny Bonifacio, Joel Juico, Offie Pacheco, Mads Domingo, Norma Cruz, Tess Baniquid; Equitable PCI bank manager Ding Francisco; Coca-Cola Bottlers Phil. Inc.'s Noli Villena, Marlon Caparas, Arniel Porte, Larrie Mercado, Rolly Inocencio and Butch Bernales.

PHOTO EVENT. The biggest photography event in Southeast Asia is set on Jan. 31-Feb. 4, at the Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati City.

This year's theme is "Photography at Work." The event will present world-class photography programs to keep participants in-step with technology. The workshop/seminar will be held at the Asian Institute of Management.

There will be trade shows of leading photo suppliers, photo competitions, photo-exhibits, hands-on workshop and fellowship and sharing with fellow photographers, inclusive of opening cocktails and closing ceremonies dinner. PWM 2002 Secretariat is at 7/F Comfoods Building, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City. Call 843-5341 or 813-7420.

TRAINING. The Maple Leaf Training Center is now open for enrollment for six-month training courses for caregiver employment to Canada. Enrollment starts Jan. 7. Maple Leaf Training Center is at Room 410, Verde Oro Building, 535 Commonwealth Ave. (near Our Lady of Grace Montessori College), Diliman, QC. Call 951-9823 to 25.

LITERARY CONFERENCE. The British Council will present two of Great Britain's brightest young writers, poet Menna Elfyn and novelist Toni Davidson, along with top Filipino writers in the Sixth Annual Philippine-British Literary Conference on Jan. 17-22. This year, the conference will be held in Manila and Iloilo. The Far Eastern University will cosponsor the Manila leg on Jan. 17 and 18, at the Institute of Arts and Sciences conference room, FEU campus, Nicanor M. Reyes Street, Sampaloc, Manila. The University of San Agustin will cosponsor the Iloilo leg Jan. 21 and 22, at the Instructional Media Center, Fray Luis de Leon Building, University of San Agustin, General Luna Street, Iloilo City.

Call the British Council at 914-1011 to -14 or The Literature and Humanities Department or English Department, FEU at 735-5621 local 229, or the University of San Agustin, Iloilo at (033) 337-7716.

CONFERENCE. The Center for Learning and Teaching Styles, Philippines, an affiliate of the International Learning Styles Network based at St. John's University in New York, has begun preparations for the 3rd National Education Conference. Called "3nec@ picc," the conference will be held Feb. 11-12 at the Philippine International Convention Center with the theme "Festival of Learning Styles and Teaching Strategies." Activities will include plenary and breakout sessions designed on common learning styles themes and principles.

CONTEST WINNER. Edgar Samar, a psychology student at the Ateneo de Manila University, bagged the 2002 PBBY Salanga Prize.

Samar's works have been published in Heights, Tomas, Musa and JUNIOR INQUIRER MAGAZINE. His story, "Uuwi na ang Nanay kong si Darna!" won for him a gold medal, courtesy of the National Library, plus P25,000 in cash from the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

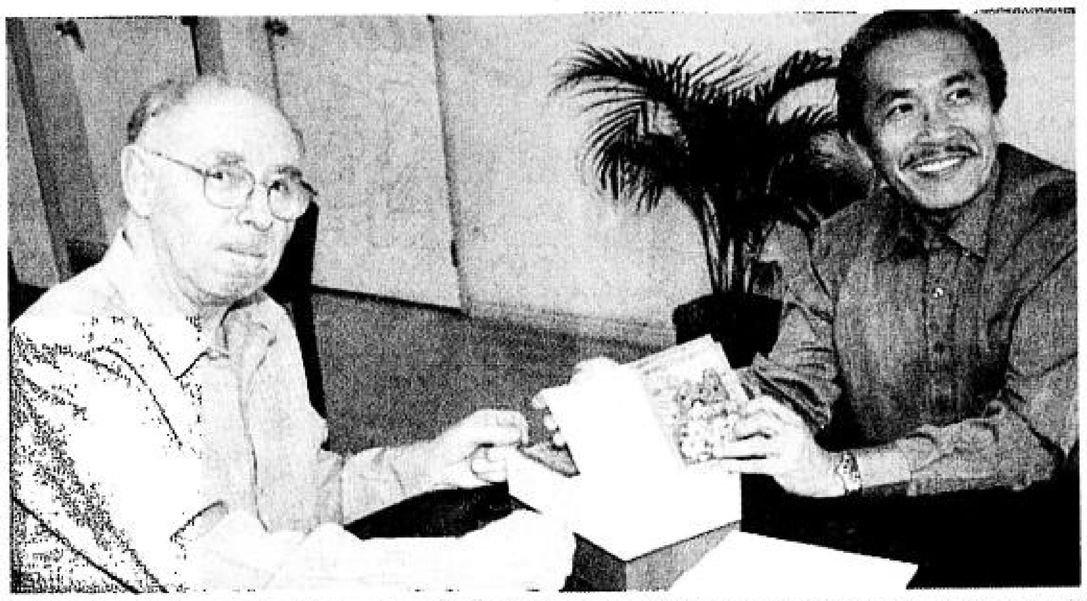
Samar will receive the prizes in formal ceremonies during the National Children's Book Day celebration on July 16, to be held at the CCP.

The nationwide contest is open to all professional and aspiring writers in English or Filipino, sponsored by the Philippine Board on Books for Young People. Non-winning entries may be claimed at the PBBY Secretariat, 73-A Scout Limbaga Street, Brgy. Laging Handa, Q.C. Call 372-3548/49, or fax 372-4204.

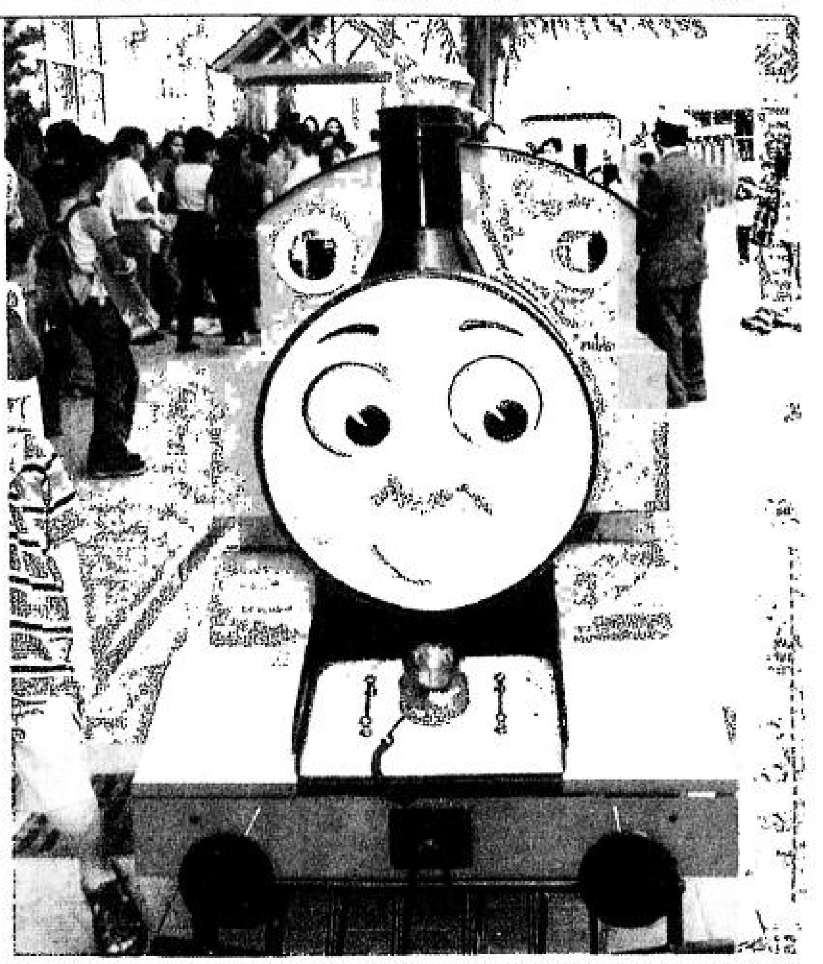
SINGING COMPETITION. Filipino male and female singers, below 35 and 33 years old, respectively, are invited to participate in the First Shen Xiang International Singing Competition 2002 to be held on May 10-20 in Beijing, China. Detailed information and photocopies of the brochure are available for free at the Music Division of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Call 832-2314/1125 local 1605.

Applications may be sent to the organizing committee: The First Shen Xiang International Singing Competition, Room 313 An Yuan Building 23 Heping Xijie, Beijing, People's Republic of China or e-mail professor shenxiang@163.net. yhl@public.gb.com.cm. Entries must be sent by Jan. 31.

SPECIAL PROMO. Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. is giving away P2.5 million worth of prizes in its "Hello Digitel, Hello Milyonaryo!" promo, held in six monthly draws until May 24. Subscribers can win P20,000 in the monthly draws and P1 million in the grand draw. The promo is open to new Digitel landline subscribers and existing subscribers with good credit standing who applied for additional Digitel lines since Nov. 1 until April 14. New Digitel subscribers have two chances of winning. First, they can participate in the six monthly minor draws. They can also participate in the P1 million grand raffle draw on May 24, to be held at the Digitel head office in Libis, QC.



MANUEL Baldemor's paintings are again featured in the 2001 collection of Unicef greeting cards. Since 1986, over one million Unicef cards with Baldemor's paintings have been sold. These have raised P12 million for children's programs and services. Call 892-0611 to 25 or 840-0249, or visit Unicef at the G/F Neda Building, 106 Amorsolo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.



THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE A-TOOTING AT THE MALL

Grab a ride now on Thomas the Tank Engine, track star of the Railway series of books written by Rev. Ww. Awdry in 1945. "Thomas and Friends" has since debuted on TV and airs locally on RPN 9, Mondays to Fridays, 5-5:30 p.m. This time, the cheerful engine chugs on the streets of Rockwell Center every weekend until Jan. 6. Thomas the Tank Engine can accommodate up to 40 passengers per trip. Boarding time is 1:30-5:30 p.m. Tickets for the train ride at P70 are available at the Power Plant Mall. Any Thomas the Tank Engine item purchased at Page One and Kidz Station entitles one to a free ride.

Now The Philippines' No. 1 Imported Pasta
Angel Hair bellisimo!
MADE FROM 100% DURUM WHEAT
COOKS IN 2 MINUTES
ANGEL HAIR
SAN REMO
SPAGHETTI
500g
SAN REMO
THE PASTA PEOPLE SINCE 1936

Perfect Angel Hair pasta! That's what you get from San Remo. Always full and firm to the bite.

San Remo is the innovator of great pasta shapes. It has a wide selection of pasta varieties, all made from 100% Durum wheat, giving the pasta its luscious golden color and al dente texture. It's what real pasta should be.

That's why you can't [illegible] go wrong with San Remo.

San Remo Angel Hair

Capelli d' Angelo or Angel Hair pasta cooks only in two minutes because of its thin, delicate strands. Best if used with olive oil (or butter) or light, thin sauces. Break in half and you can also use it for soups.

It's Time You Had Real Pasta

Featured Recipe: ANGEL HAIR ALA GAMBAS

INGREDIENTS:
250g San Remo Angel Hair
2 tbsp. olive oil
300g fresh shrimps, shelled
1/4 cup red and green bell pepper, chopped
1pc. chili, chopped
1 onion, chopped
3 tbsp. garlic, chopped
1/2 + 1/4 cup water, divided
2pcs. shrimp-flavored bouillon cubes
parsley for garnishing
salt and pepper to taste

PROCEDURE:
1. Cook Angel Hair according to package directions. Drain and set aside.
2. Heat oil in a pan, and saute garlic, onion and chili.
3. Add shrimps and red and green peppers. Season with salt and pepper. Cook for 2 minutes, then set aside.
4. In saucepan, combine 1/2 cup water and shrimp cubes. Bring to a boil 1-2 minutes.
5. Reduce heat to low, add cooked pasta and toss until liquid is absorbed and well-blended.
6. Serve pasta on plate and top with shrimp mixture.

For more exciting and appetizing recipes log on to www.san-remo.com.au or e-mail us at sysumktg@info.com.ph

Say "Hello" this NEW YEAR's DAY with as LOW as ₱2.00/minute* Globe-to-Globe rates!

Today's the day to call those dear to you and talk all you want with our special Globe Handyphone-to-Globe Handyphone New Year's Day** rates. As low as ₱3.00 a minute for Prepaid, Advantage and Personal Plans... and an even lower ₱2.00 a minute for Business, Executive and CEO Plan subscribers. It is Globe's special way of getting you together with your loved ones as you celebrate New Year's Day!

*VAT Inclusive

** Valid only on Jan. 1, 2002, 12:01 AM to 12 Midnight.

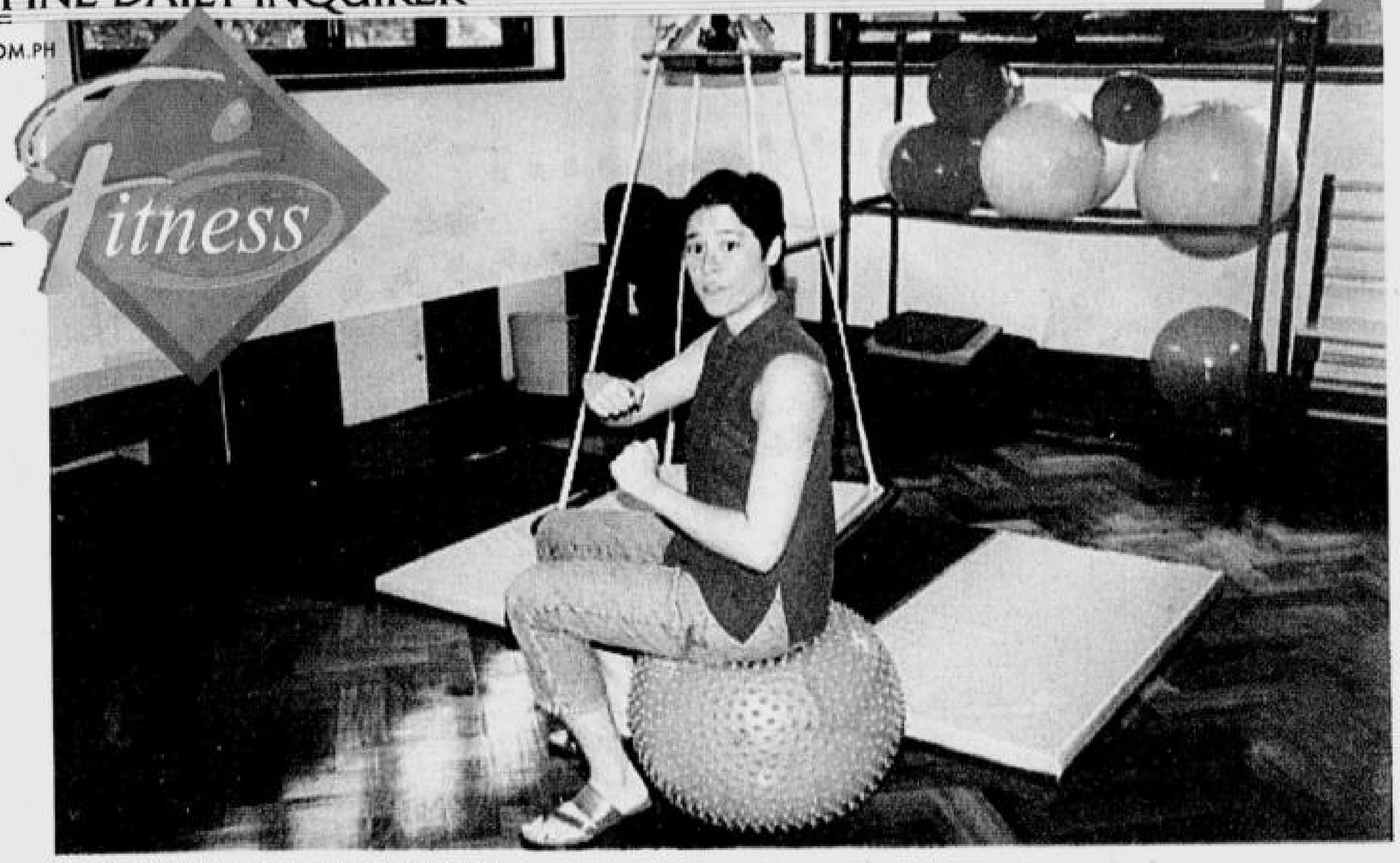
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4406, Series of 2001.

Globe
HANDYPHONE

Special place for special people

By Ross Harper-Alonso
Contributor
PHOTOS BY GRACE TACSUAN

Therapy Works is a second home to 'differently abled children,' their parents and therapists



CRIS de Leon, occupational therapist

DESPITE its modern facade, Therapy Works' three-story building blends with the old charm of Parañaque's postwar compounds. More than a multidisciplinary therapy center that offers aquatic, physical, occupational and speech therapy, it is a second home where therapists, parents and their children create a nourishing environment for differently abled children. Built on land where family ties run deep, it is also a testament to program coordinator Cristina de Leon's love and devotion for Raffy, her special brother.

"Raffy is 37 years old and was born with severe mental retardation," explains Cris. "My parents looked everywhere for treatment. Unfortunately at the time there were no therapists, only people with good intentions. These people, however, did not have an idea on how to treat such children and make them as functional as possible," Cris adds. "Others felt a lobotomy was the next best thing but my parents wouldn't hear of it. At some point, they decided to leave him be and care for Raffy the best way they could at home."

Cris recalls how Raffy would throw tantrums that left him and the rest of the household frustrated. "It wasn't his fault, no one taught him how to express himself and we didn't know how to help him," says the protective sister. "I suppose these were episodes in my young life that encouraged me to pursue a career that could help improve the lives of people with disabilities."

The bubbly and charming Cris was born 10 years after her brother. After graduating from the University of the Philippines in 1997 with a degree in BS Occupational Therapy, she left for San Diego to study aqua therapy, a major treatment technique at Therapy Works.

Clinic and pool of hope

It's very unlikely if Dr. and Ms Badoding de Leon would one day experience the loneliness of an empty nest. After raising their own seven children, they now have countless children and adult patients coming or leaving for treatment just a few meters from their front door. The clinic and indoor pool were built within the De Leons' manicured garden. "Oh, they love hearing the children enjoying themselves and sometimes they stay and watch the sessions, but I tell them to go away," says Cris with a mischievous laugh.

Building a heated indoor pool was part of the plan from the very beginning. Cris believes the therapeutic benefits one gets from working in water are unlimited. The aquatic program is available to athletes and geriatric and pediatric patients. "People with physical disabilities cannot move properly on land since gravity pulls us down, leaving us with no support from the environment," she says. "Two common patients we treat are adults who have suffered a stroke or children born with cerebral palsy, a medical condition that affects the control of muscles. However, if you put these people in water, they are free to move. We tailor the exercises to have water support, resist or assist the movement such as in the Swiss Badragaz Ring Method, a method we also use to treat lower back pain and arthritis."

Lukewarm water has a calming effect and a feeling of well-being on people. After they get over their fear of water, they are transformed from listless patients to proactive dynamos. "We had an 8-year-old girl with cerebral palsy who had been going to different centers since she was 4 months old, but there was little progress. She was very manipulative and often in a bad mood," recalls Cris. "We began working with her two hours a week and not very long after, there was not only an amazing physical improvement but her whole persona seemed to change. She learned to swim to the deep part of the pool [with floaters and under the watchful eyes of therapists] using her hands. Whenever I asked her to collect the rubber balls at the far end of the pool, she would go willingly. She now runs fast. Her movements then were extremely awkward and unstable."

The pool sessions have helped many other children develop balance and coordination, self-care proficiency and interactive skills.

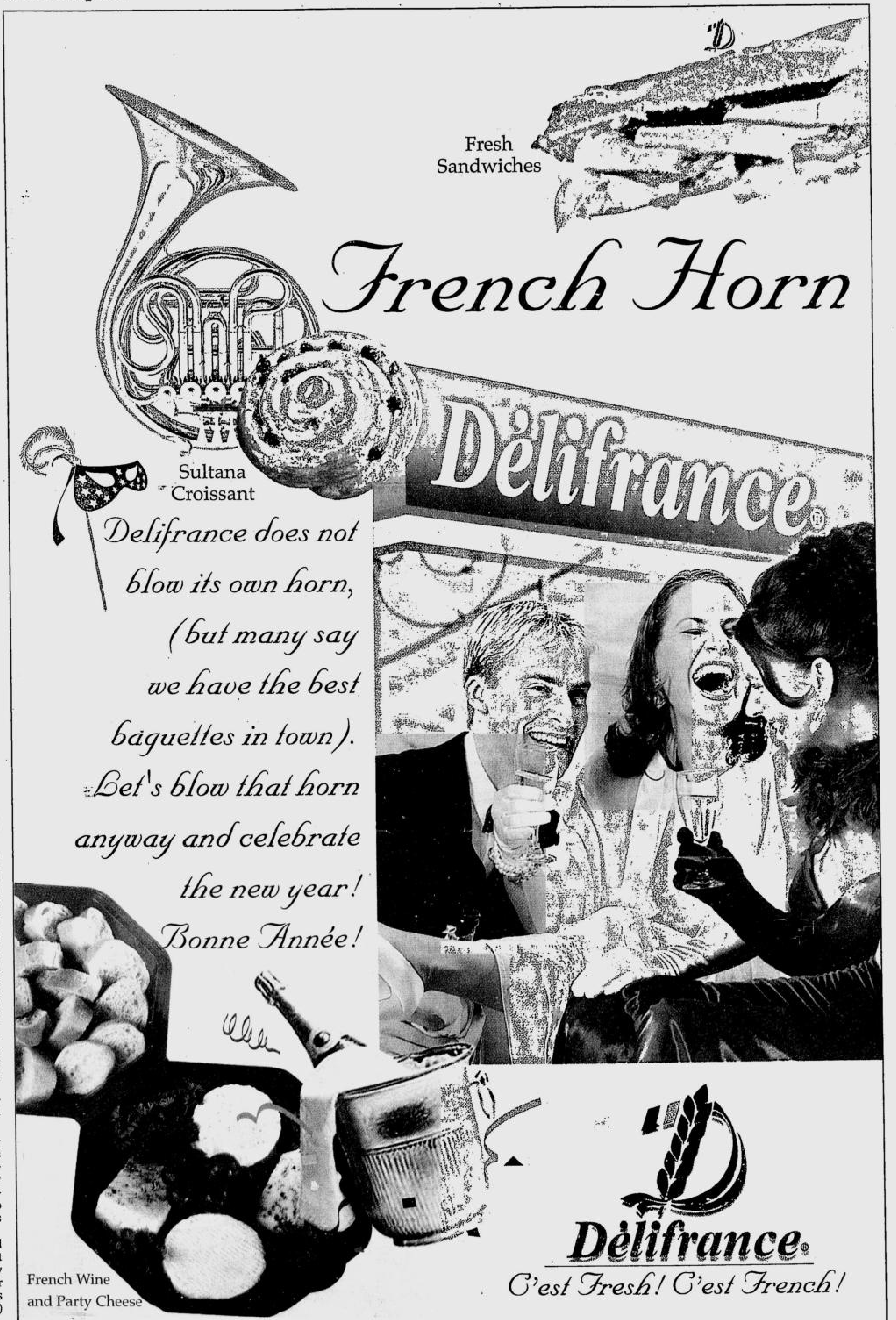
Therapy Works has seven occupational therapists, two physical therapists and four speech therapists to provide personalized treatment programs for every patient. They try to make every therapy experience as fun as possible by incorporating baking, cooking, gardening and art into children's sessions. Individual treatment rooms ensure the privacy of adult clients.

Rates are reasonable and no patient is turned away. "We do have some charity patients, but this doesn't mean they are treated completely free," Cris clarifies. "I was told it would be better to charge a pittance because when the service is free, there is lack of effort (on the patient's part) and compliance tends to be very low."

Family involvement

Gone are the days when parents kept their handicapped children from the rest of the world. For some reason or another, many of them never thought of reaching out for help. At Therapy

SPECIAL/p.D2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AQUATIC therapy

GROUP sessions in the pool encourage socialization, waiting, turn-taking and development of larger muscles of the body.

Special place for special people

(From page D1)

The therapeutic benefits one gets from working in water are unlimited; people with physical disabilities cannot move properly on land but if you put them in water, they are free to move

Works, there is a direct link between the therapists and the parents. The entire family is encouraged to get involved.

"Seldom do the children come to the clinic with just a helper or driver. A parent or a sibling stays with them during treatments," Cris says with pride. "Naturally some parents have high expectations that sometimes we know the child might never be able to achieve, but who are we to set limits? We tell the parents, it is baby steps their children are taking with us. They have to understand the maturing process of these children is very slow, but with our guidance and their loving support we can work together to facilitate the development of the skill. Through this process, the child learns to be independent as much as possible."

In some cases one parent has not accepted the child and the spouse; feeling guilty, he/she tries to compensate by making the child the center of his or her universe. Consequently, everything the parent does revolves around the child that they don't realize they no longer have a life. "We offer counseling for families and parents who have fallen into this pattern. It is important they improve their quality of life, too," Cris says.

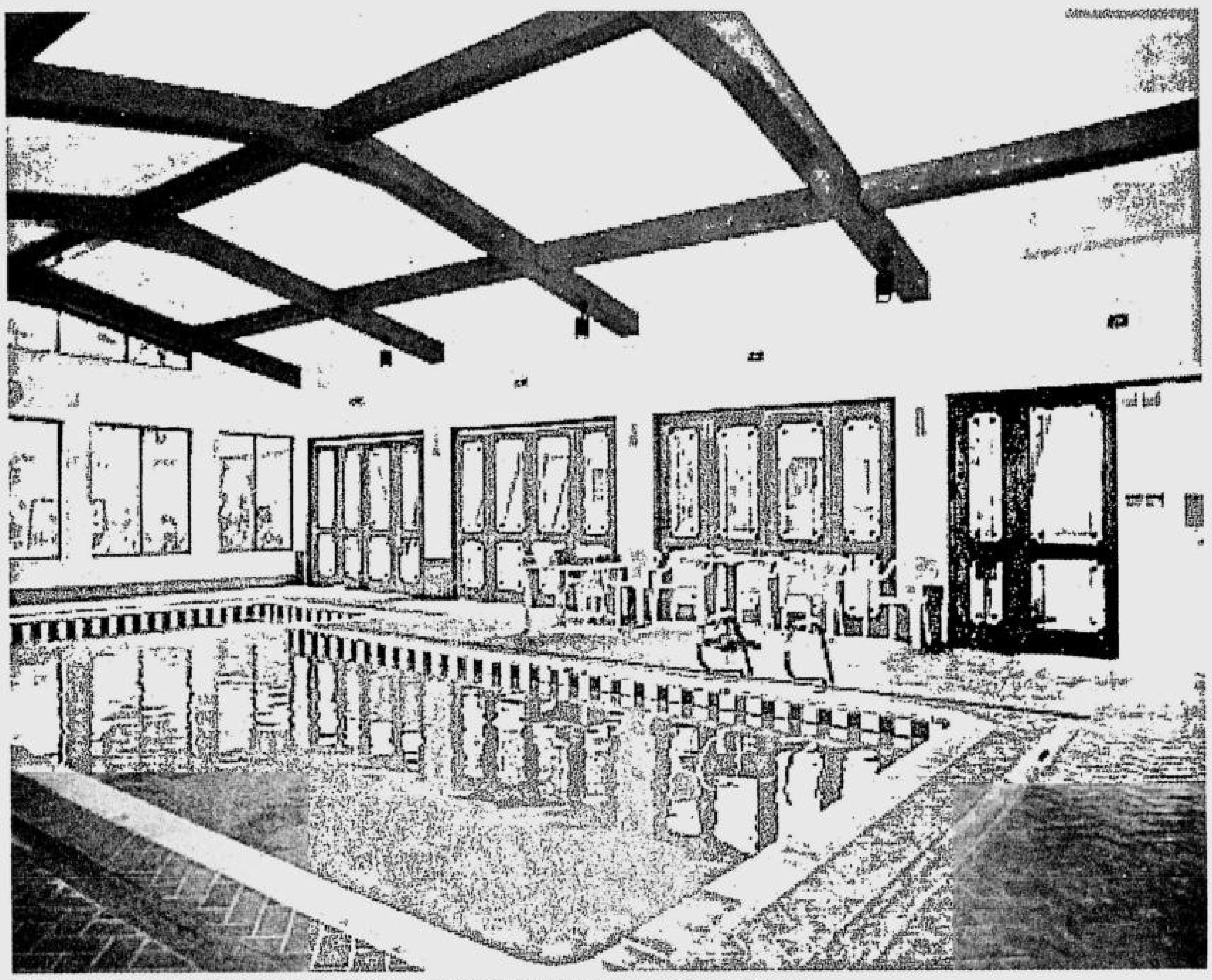
Therapy Works, at the moment, specializes in early intervention for children with autism, attention deficit, mental disorders and Down Syndrome. An Adolescent Transition Program is in the works.

"The children we treat now are infants, toddlers or kids below 10. What happens to them when they're 11 and 12 years old and still need therapy?" Cris asks. "Needless to say, we will have to shift to a more practical approach and face the reality that most of these children will never go to college or get a good job in an office. Something will have to be done to help them become productive adults later on. When I say 'productive,' it means giving them a role to fulfill in their families, community and society," says Cris. "They can be trained to do something they most probably will be doing for the rest of their lives. Maybe like putting them in charge of some chores in the house or at a family owned business. It is not at all an unreachable dream if parents start thinking of their child's future early enough," Cris says.

"There was a boy here with learning disability and mild retardation. He couldn't read but he was a Math whiz. He's now the cashier and supervises the people at their store. He can't be cheated when it comes to money and his parents can rely on him to handle the day-to-day activities," Cris adds.

Success stories like this mill around the happy colors of the clinic, reminding one that every child must be ensured a good start in life if we are to have a happy, healthy and productive future society. Outside, the grounds may have the look of a resort and an air of sophistication, but it is the warm hospitality, patient and gentle souls behind Therapy Works that makes a child smile or gives someone respite from pain.

Call Therapy Works at 853-0121/0358 or e-mail cgdeleon@I-manila.com



THE INDOOR solar-heated swimming pool is ideal for individual or group therapy sessions.

PHYSICAL therapy activities which help develop strength and endurance while standing are incorporated in play activities.

USE of everyday activities are part of therapy

Children with ADHD are not hopeless, study says

FOR THOSE who still believe that it is impossible for their children to have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity or (ADHD), better think again. More and more children are being diagnosed of ADHD, but it doesn't mean that they are "abnormal" and hopeless.

In a recent media briefing, Henry Tenedero, president of the Center for Learning and Teaching Styles (CLTS) Philippines, presented the study performed by Dr. Annie Wells, Ph. D., of the Alabama ABM University. Tenedero and Wells are both affiliated with the International Learning Styles Network, which is based at St. John's University in New York.

According to Dr. Wells, ADHD is a condition that affects 3-5 percent of school-age students today. The disorder is also often accompanied by poor memory, slowness at completing tasks and poor management of time and tasks.

But according to Dr. Wells, parents and teachers of students with ADHD need not exhaust themselves as various ADHD symptoms can be addressed simply and effectively.

For example, symptoms of inattentiveness can be remedied by: using seating arrangements or cubicles that are not near others for individual work; practicing attention and concentration exercises in the midst of extraneous sounds; allowing frequent breaks or distributed practice; and using multisensory materials.

Hyperactivity, on the other hand, can be addressed by: teaching or addressing the problem with kinesthetic and factual tasks; requiring learning tasks which require movement; and allowing students to use dance, drama, and pantomime to illustrate reaming.

Interestingly, the ADHD characteristics: inattentiveness, restlessness or hyperactivity, and impulsiveness will be thoroughly discussed during the 3rd National Education Conference slated on Feb. 11 and 12 at the Philippine International Convention Center with the theme: "Festival of Learning Styles and Teaching Strategies."

Tenedero, CLTS Philippines president and conference organizer, said that the discussions and activities are not meant to be exhaustive but to provide examples of what can be done to address various symptoms of ADHD.

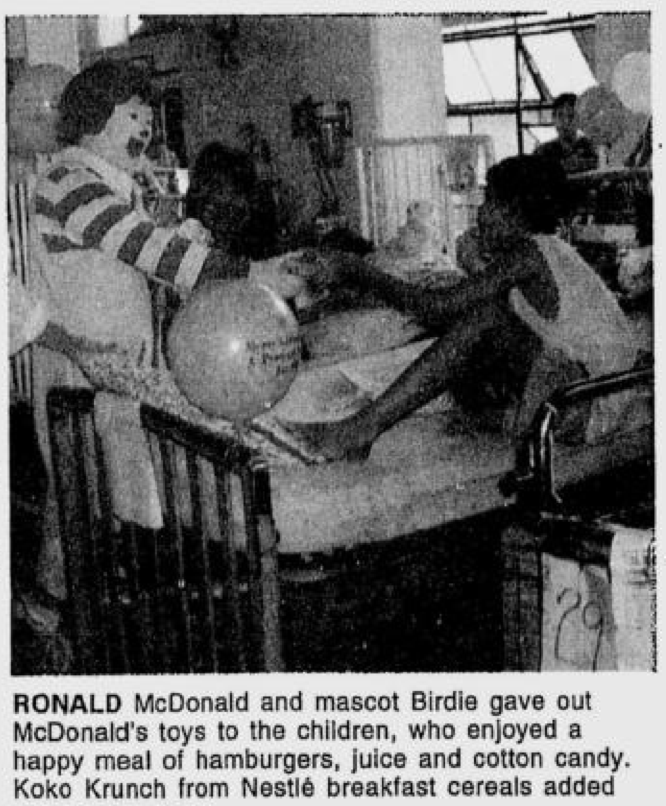
A child's garden

TO SPREAD joy among the critically-ill children at the Philippine General Hospital's pediatric charity wards, Canadian-based life insurance company Manulife Philippines opened Migi's Garden recently with a Christmas party for the children. The landscaped play area, built around a patch of green lawn and shade trees at the PGH, boasts of a Little Tykes playground system.

The garden comes after a series of Migi's Corners opened by Lifestyle reporter Cathy Babao-Guballa at six hospitals in the country in memory of her son Migi, who died at age 4 of a congenital heart ailment.

DEPARTMENT OF P CS
spital

NO secret garden now after the ribbon cutting by Migi's sister Pia Guballa, Manulife's Ces Jacinto, Jom Ignacio, Migi's grandmother Caridad Sanchez, landscape artist Isabel Concio-Quimpo, mom Cathy, PGH's Dr. Carmelo Alfiler and Dr. Edward Tordesillas.



RONALD McDonald and mascot Birdie gave out McDonald's toys to the children, who enjoyed a happy meal of hamburgers, juice and cotton candy. Koko Krunch from Nestlé breakfast cereals added even more cheer.

WARM SMILES IN BAGUIO. (From left): Smart marketing events' Mabel de Guzman, Bandette Medina, Miles Inocentes, golfing great Emy Arcilla, Ericsson's Miguel Rodrigo, Anne Perez and Telecoms Specialists Inc.'s Verge Carantes

KAMAYAN-SAISAKI's Jayjay Vargas and Rene Legon, Duty-Free's Rudy Montecillo pose with the singing belles of St. Louis University

Partying at the world's biggest amateur golfest

A NIGHT of wine, tobacco and a little entertainment marked the welcome party of the prestigious and historic 52nd Fil-Am Golf Tournament in Baguio, presented this year by Smart-Sony Ericcson, CAP and John Hay Poro Point Development Corp.

Participants of the golfest, dubbed by the Guinness Book of World Records as the largest and oldest amateur golf tournament in the world, partied the night away during the Fil-Am Golf welcome cocktails held at the Camp John Hay Clubhouse recently.

Avid golfers braved the record-low evening temperatures of the City of Pines to break bread with the other participants, a number of which include an estimated 200 foreign players from the Asia-Pacific rim.

The clubhouse was splendidly decorated in magical reds and greens, with fantasy figures freely roaming around the clubhouse grounds. A mini-musical was provided by the famous cultural group of St. Louis University, headed by no less than the wife of another Fil-Am golf participant, lawyer Damaso Bangoet, Camp John Hay Poro Point Development Corp. vice president.

Amateur shotmakers who also joined the golfing event included actor Raymart Santiago, Philip Salvador, Emy Arcilla, RP Putra Cup veterans Angelo Que, Jerome Deliarte and Cookie Lao.

The Fil-Am golf tilt has always attracted golf enthusiasts, both in and out of the country, to flock to Baguio at the start of the holiday season. Corporate topguns compete with show biz folk and other golf shotmakers to vie for the No. 1 spot in, perhaps, the country's first longest-running world-class golfing event.

FIL-AM Golf organizer Shean Bedi, Camp John Hay Golf Club board chair Bob Sobrepeña and Telecoms Specialists Inc. president Greg Atienza

Antihistamine that treats allergies minus drowsiness

MOTORISTS taking anti-allergy medicines need not worry about getting drowsy while driving, especially during long-haul trips with the recent launching in the Philippines of the new antihistamine, Telfast (fexofenadine hydrochloride).

Manufactured by Aventis Pharma Inc., Telfast is expected to lessen the number of accidents caused by antihistamines belonging to the first- and second-generation, according to Prof. Ian Hindmarch, M.D., who was guest lecturer during the formal launching attended by the country's top medical experts and specialists.

Telfast is the only available third-generation nonsedating antihistamine in the Philippine market today, according to Hindmarch, who is also head of HPRU Medical Research Centre of the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom.

He explained that Telfast doesn't alter a person's level of alertness or directly or indirectly impair cognitive and psychomotor performance, thus making the medicine perfect for drivers.

US records show that three percent of individuals taking antihistamines and involved in accidents were later found guilty in 72 percent of cases compared with 86 percent in accident victims using alcohol.

In his lecture, Dr. Hindmarch cited the sedative effects of antihistamines and explained the need for third-generation drugs like Telfast in the effective treatment of allergic conditions.

With motoring in mind, the impact of sedation caused by antihistamines on the safe performance of daily activities, particularly driving, is an important aspect when doctors decide which antihistamine should be prescribed to ambulant patients with allergies and dermatological conditions, Dr. Hindmarch stressed.

In the case of Telfast, he added that it is expected to offer the therapeutic efficacy of the first- and second-generation drugs with improved pharmacokinetics and metabolism that avoids the side effects associated with the parent compound and other metabolics.

Aventis is a product of Rhone Poulenc and Hoechst,

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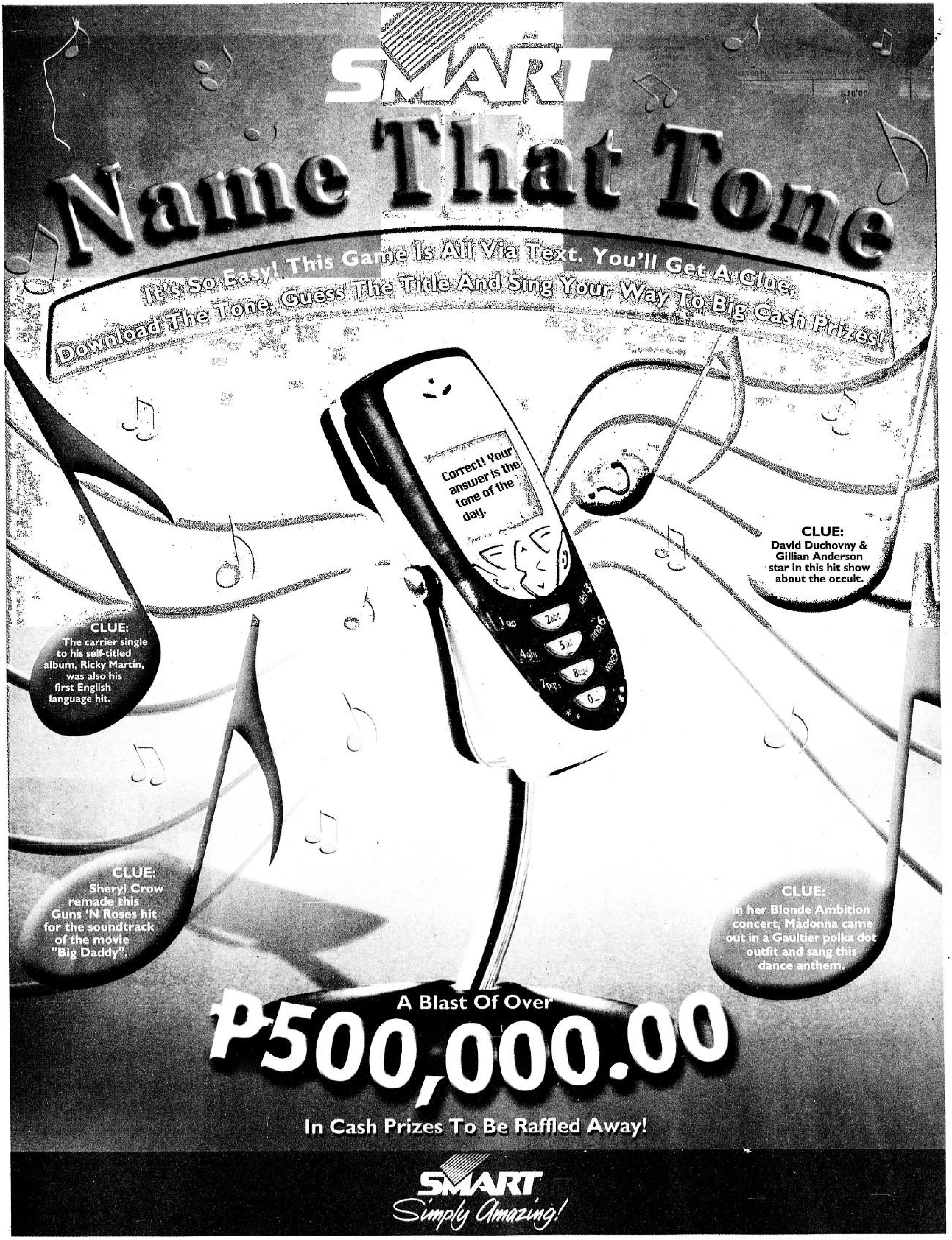
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Name That Tone
It's So Easy! This Game Is All Via Text. You'll Get A Clue,
Download The Tone, Guess The Title And Sing Your Way To Big Cash Prizes!
Correct! Your answer is the tone of the day.
CLUE: David Duchovny & Gillian Anderson star in this hit show about the occult.
CLUE: The carrier single to his self-titled album, Ricky Martin, was also his first English language hit.
CLUE: Sheryl Crow remade this Guns 'N Roses hit for the soundtrack of the movie "Big Daddy".
CLUE: In her Blonde Ambition concert, Madonna came out in a Gaultier polka dot outfit and sang this dance anthem.
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SMART NAME THAT TONE SETS THE BEAT FOR SOUNDS AND PRIZES

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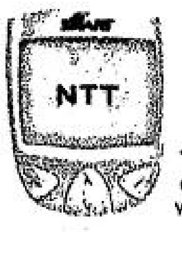


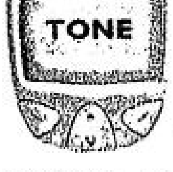
- Key in NAME <your full name> and send to 234.
- Key in BIRTH <mmddyyyy> and send to 234.
- Key in ADD <address> and send to 234.

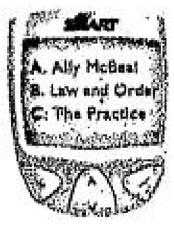
Your registration automatically earns you a raffle entry for all weekly draws.

The theme from the Emmy Award winning TV series on the lighter side of law.

Play The Game!

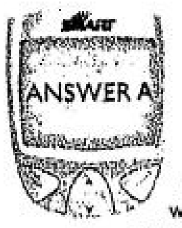
You will then receive a clue about the mystery tone of the day.




A. Ally McBeal
B. Law and Order
C: The Practice

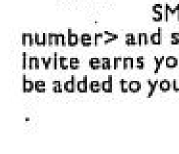
Guess The Title By Downloading The Tone!

Key in TONE and send to 234. Together with the downloaded tone, you will also receive the multiple choice set of ringtone titles.



Text in your Answer!

Simply key in ANSWER <A, B or C> and send to 234. You will receive a message telling you whether you got the correct answer or not. There will only be one chance to guess the mystery tone of the day. Each correct answer earns you 5 raffle entries for the Weekly, Monthly and Grand draws.


INVITE
09182442322

Invite Your Friends And Earn More Raffle Entries!

Key in INVITE <your friend's SMART celfone number> and send to 234. Each Invite earns you 1 raffle entry, to be added to your total raffle entries.

To redisplay the clue, key in SHOW and send to 234.

To check your raffle entries, key in POINTS and send to 234.

The mystery tone of the day will be updated at 12 midnight daily.

Only subscribers with ringtone-download-capable handsets will be able to hear the mystery tone of the day. However, downloading is necessary to get the multiple choice set of ringtone titles. A subscriber without the necessary handset can still answer based on the clue and multiple-choice set of ringtone titles.

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DRAW DATE	CASH PRIZE
GRAND DRAW: (1 winner) Feb. 11, 2002	₱200,000.00
MONTHLY DRAWS: (1 winner per draw) Jan. 14 and Feb. 11, 2002	₱50,000.00
WEEKLY DRAWS: (3 winners per draw) Dec. 21, 2001, Jan. 2, 7, 14, 21, 28, Feb. 4, and 11, 2002	₱10,000.00

**There will be a standard charge of ₱12.00 per ringtone download and ₱2.50 per message for all other transactions.*

**Cut-off time for the entries will be at 11:59 PM of the day before the draw date.*

**Ringtone-download-capable handsets are: Nokia 3210, 3310, 3330, 6150, 6210, 6250, 7110, 8210, 8250, 8310, and 9210.*

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New Year toll: Fewer injuries, deaths, less smog

Story Below, Column 3

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2002 ★ 38 PAGES 4 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 25 ₱15

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- **Argentina leaderless, penniless**
  WORLD / A9
- **Lawyer pushing for Nur exile**
  NEWS / A5
- **HK maids hold rally anew**
  NEWS / A5

Grandma, 81, world champion liar for 2001

MILWAUKEE—Maxine Christensen was lying when she said her car was so old the state issued upper and lower plates.

But the fib about her old beater's

GRANDMA/ A4

MUKHA BA AKONG SINUNGALING?

Explosives expert to testify vs Miraflor

A TOTAL of 100.5 blocks of C4 and TNT explosives with timing devices were recovered by an Isafp team from the Sangley Naval Base, a cache "more than enough" to wipe out the military camps, oil depots, Malacañang and other government and business offices.

By Christine Herrera

AN EXPLOSIVES expert identified with Sen. Panfilo Lacson Jr. will testify against Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor and other former Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force officials suspected to be plotting to destabilize the government, military spy chief Col. Victor Corpus said yesterday.

Petty Officer I Ruben Sotto, former explosives expert of the defunct Special Reaction Unit which Miraflor used to head, has admitted that Miraflor ordered him to keep the C4 and TNT explosives and timing devices and refuse to turn them over to Special Warfare Group (SWAG) Commander Rosauro Sarmiento.

Corpus, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said four other military officers would testify against Miraflor.

MIRAFLOR: Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman?

The four officers had already issued either joint or individual affidavits to corroborate Sotto's claim, Corpus said.

EXPLOSIVES/ A16

Baron waited for his killer

Police suspect victim's disclosure of coup plot behind murder

By TJ Burgonio, Christian V. Esguerra and Carlito Pablo

A MAN with a pistol walked up from behind Baron Alexander Cervantes and shot him once pointblank in the head at 6 p.m. on New Year's Eve last Monday. Two hours later, Cervantes was dead.

The self-described spokesperson of the Young Officers Union (YOU), Cervantes "seemed to know his killer." And he even waited for him on New Year's Eve outside a drugstore at the corner of Times Street and Alabang-Zapote Road in Pamplona, Las Piñas, according to an Inquirer source at the Las Piñas police.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said that politics may have something to with the killing of Cervantes but that she is leaving it up to the investigators to determine "who killed him and why."

According to police investigators, the Cervantes murder could be linked to his disclosure last week of an alleged coup plot against the Macapagal administration.

Police are also looking at the alleged rift within the YOU. A group of retired and active Army officers, YOU has been at the center of several coup attempts in recent years.

Ironically, on the day that he was killed, the YOU disowned Cervantes' remarks about a coup plot and insisted that he was no longer the group's spokesperson.

YOU also said he was not in active service with the military, was not a captain as he claimed but was only a former lieutenant who had been dropped from the military rolls in 1998 after going AWOL.

A witness told police that Cervantes, 35, "seemed to know" the man who shot and killed him.

"Baron offered no resistance. He seemed to know the suspect," the source said, quoting a

BARON/ A16

BISTADO KA NA!
THE WAY he was on Jan. 19, 2001 after the military defections led by AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Angelo Reyes confirms reports that Cervantes (circled) had the knack to weave in and out of the higher echelons of government, and of being at the right place at the right time.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Cervantes led very secretive life, says father

By Christian V. Esguerra, Martin P. Marfil, Carlito Pablo and Nancy C. Carvajal

BARON Alexander Cervantes was so secretive that his parents did not know if he was married and had children.

"He never shared anything about his private life or his military career," Rac Cervantes, 60, yesterday told the Inquirer at his son's wake at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel in Sucat, Parañaque.

The young Cervantes never brought friends to his house in BFRV Village in Las Piñas where he stayed with his parents at the time of his death, according to his father.

"I have accepted what happened., We leave everything to the authorities," the father said.

CERVANTES/ A16

THE NEW YEAR sky reflects the nation's mood for celebration to welcome 2002, the Year of the Water Horse.
AFP

PEACEFUL NEW YEAR

Fewer injuries, deaths and less smog–DOH

By Armand N. Nocum, TJ Burgonio and Nelson Flores
in Manila
and Anthony S. Allada,
PDI Mindanao Bureau

THE DAY after, there was less smog and fewer victims of firecracker blasts and stray bullets.

Thanks to an economic downturn that forced many Filipinos to forego buying firecrackers, according to Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit.

Dayrit yesterday said that the number of recorded firecracker-related injuries from the New Year's Eve revelry went down by 63 percent.

Davao City was outstanding. A 6-year-old boy was its sole firecracker victim. President Macapagal-Arroyo cited Mayor Rodrigo Duterte as an example for all local executives:

"This is a good way to start the New Year. There is a decrease in fireworks injuries in all the 50 government hospitals all over the coun-

FEWER/ A4

Solgen says gov't not keen on $540-M SMC-Kirin deal

By Michael Lim Ubac

SOLICITOR General Simeon V. Marcelo yesterday said the government was not keen on supporting the proposal of San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. to allow Japanese brewer Kirin C. Ltd. to buy 15 percent of San Miguel for $540 million.

Marcelo told the Inquirer that the deal would "dilute" the value of the 27-percent share of coconut farmers to 24 percent, allowing Kirin and the Cojuangco group to gain "effective control" of San Miguel.

Marcelo said the proposed buy-in "does not guarantee" that it would benefit all stockholders,

SOLGEN/ A4

Second FRONT PAGE

WOW! ANG SIPAG TALAGA NI MA'AM!

GMA hits road again–to south this time

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo kicks off the New Year with a four-day provincial "roadshow" visiting new towns and meeting with local officials as a way to mark her first year in office, a Palace statement said.

According to her schedule, the President will be visiting eight towns and three cities in the Bicol region and Maguindanao province.

She will also be holding a Cabinet meeting for the first time outside Malacañang. She will convene the weekly Cabinet meeting in Cotabato City on Friday.

The President will be returning to the Palace on Saturday afternoon.

Ms Macapagal spent the first day of the new year in Malacañang, having just returned from a five-day holiday in Baguio City.

No official activities were scheduled yesterday.

The President has vowed to visit far-flung areas to "bring the government" to the people.

Ms Macapagal assumed the presidency on Jan. 20 last year, after Joseph Estrada was ousted by the second People Power uprising.

Her first stop will be Palo town in Leyte today to address the 12th Boy Scouts of the Philippines National Jamboree.

Then she will inaugurate the Lobi Bridge in Barangay Limbuhan Daku in Tanauan, Leyte.

From Leyte, she goes to Masbate to visit two new towns, Milagrosa and Pio V. Corpuz.

She will meet with local officials over dinner at the house of Mario Espinosa in Masbate City.

On Thursday, she will go to Sorsogon to visit three new towns: Sta. Magdalena, Juban and Casiguran.

She will spend the night in Jovellar, Albay, where she will meet with local officials.

On Friday, she will convene her Cabinet at the Estosan Hotel in Cotabato City, which is the seat of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Before the meeting, however, she will visit another new town, Paglat, in Maguindanao.

She will be meeting with Cotabato City officials and the newly elected ARMM officials at dinner on Friday.

To cap her four-day roadshow, the President will attend the installation ceremonies of ARMM officials led by Gov. Parouk Hussin at the Shariff Kabunsuan Complex in Cotabato City.

Ms Macapagal will be back in Malacañang on Saturday afternoon to receive the new ambassadors of Malaysia and Croatia.

The opposition in Congress, meanwhile, said the public can expect the congressional opposition in the House to be more "vigorous and vigilant in scrutinizing and monitoring the implementation of government programs and even the bills presented for approval."

In a phone interview, House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla said the opposition would also monitor and report the "wrongdoing" of Macapagal administration officials.

The opposition will also "take government to task" on "valid" political issues and concerns, said Padilla.

He did not see this commitment as a violation of President Macapagal's call for a moratorium on politicking. *Dona Pazzibugan and Christine Avendaño*

1 soldier, four hunters slain in Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—A soldier was killed while at least six other persons were wounded when an unidentified man tossed a grenade in a busy flea market in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao, Monday night. Most of the injured were fish vendors.

In Lanao del Sur, unidentified gunmen killed four wild boar hunters and injured another in a surprise attack in a jungle area in Maciu town, officials said Tuesday.

Army Maj. Zotico Cagulada said several men with assault rifles stumbled on the six boar hunters in the jungle and greeted them with "happy new year" before suddenly opening fire.

Cagulada said four hunters died on the spot while the other two—including one who was wounded—managed to flee. He did not identify them.

Killed in the Maguindanao market bombing was Pfc. Benigno Caparas of the Army's 6th Infantry Division.

Rushed to the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center were Anisa Ibrahim, Zalika Guiamad, Norma Datukaka, Lourdes Lansayan, Capt. Gil Pepugal and Pfc. Ric Oseña.

The 7 p.m. blast occurred in Barangay Cross Awang, one kilometer from the 6th ID headquarters.

Abay Datukaka, Norma's 11-year-old daughter, said her mother was busy at her stall when she heard a loud explosion. At first, she thought it was a firecracker.

"Then I saw my mother bleeding. Some people fell, so I ran away," Abay said.

It was a busy day at the market as people were preparing for the New Year's Day celebration.

Caparas died while undergoing treatment at the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center.

Abay said the soldiers were buying fish at her mother's stall when the explosion occurred.

In the Lanao del Sur incident, Cagulada said the boar hunters were unarmed and were on their way home to Iligan City.

Boar hunters in the area use pingpong balls stuffed with gunpowder and rigged with a detonator as a sort of explosive trap to disable or kill their prey.

Cagulada said Muslim rebels in the past had killed boar hunters—who are all either Christian or animist in Mindanao which has a large Muslim population that does not eat pork.

In Davao Oriental last Friday, suspected New People's Army rebels abducted and killed three persons in Cateel town.

A belated report to police identified the victims as Jonie, 27, Ruel, 20, and Rudy, 29, all surnamed Baguiohanon and residents of Barangay Mainit in Cateel.

Barangay chair Prosperado Abarca reported the incident to the local police who are investigating the killing. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, Edwin O. Fernandez and Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau, with an AP report*

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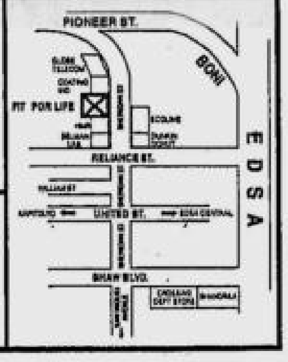

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Tiahrt 'satisfied' with RP-US cooperation–AFP chief

ARMED Forces chief of staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva said yesterday US Rep. Todd Tiahrt was "satisfied" with the level of cooperation between Filipino soldiers and US military advisers who have been training them in the war against the Abu Sayyaf.

Tiahrt arrived in the Philippines Monday to ask the Philippine government to let US forces help in the hunt for the Abu Sayyaf and speed up the rescue of an American missionary couple, Martin and Gracia Burnham, who hail from Tiahrt's state of Kansas.

The Burnhams have been held by the Abu Sayyaf since May when they were kidnapped by the terrorist group along with another American and 17 Filipinos.

The other American, Guillermo Sobero, was beheaded along with some hostages, while the rest were freed allegedly upon payment of ransom.

Southern Command military chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu said that when he showed Tiahrt the details of their operation against the Abu Sayyaf, "he was very much impressed."

He said he told the US congressman of the difficulty in operating against the Abu Sayyaf in the rough terrain and thick jungle of Basilan.

Cimatu said the US military advisers who are in the south were "collecting data" to be used in going after the Abu Sayyaf but were not taking part in the actual rescue.

He said that in his meeting with Tiahrt, he asked the congressman for help in getting more US military equipment like unmanned surveillance aircraft, to help the local armed forces.

Col. Hermogenes Esperon, head of the 103rd Brigade pursuing the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan, said his troops were closing in on the terrorist group with latest reports saying the Burnhams were "frail, weak but they can still make it."

"There is no need to be pessimistic," Esperon said.

Tiahrt, who flew directly to Zamboanga City from the US Monday, was accompanied by 11 other ranking US officials.

Yesterday, he was set to visit Basilan to inspect the island where the Burnhams have been held captive for over seven months now.

He was slated to meet with President Macapagal-Arroyo at Malacañang last night to ask that US forces be allowed to join in the hunt for the Abu Sayyaf.

The President had said she was not inclined to grant the US request at this time.

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said he expected Tiahrt to discuss using US troops to rescue the Burnhams when he met with Macapagal, "but right now, the policy of the government, as announced by the President, is that we'd rather not have (US) combat troops participate in operations against the Abu Sayyaf."

"We feel that our own troops can handle the situation," he said.

AFP

Cordillera armed factions unified

BAGUIO CITY—The process of integrating the armed troops of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army into the Armed Forces will begin on Jan. 16 in Isabela province, Army Col. Juanito Dalmas said.

Dalmas was speaking at ceremonies at the Speaker's Cottage here on Sunday to mark the unification of two rival factions of the CPLA, a press statement from the Speaker's office said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, who presided over the unification ceremonies, said Congress has allocated P86 million for the first phase of the integration program that would involve 264 CPLA members. He said President Macapagal-Arroyo "has confirmed this allocation."

The unification rites brought together Mayor Mailed Molina, supreme commander of the 1,250-strong CPLA, and rival leaders Mariano Agosto, the elder statesman representing the faction of the late Conrado Balweg and Jet Sagudang, commander of the Balweg faction's armed group.

The rites reaffirmed an agreement that Molina and Agosto signed on Dec. 10, in Bangued, Abra, in which they "agreed to support one and the other in our common effort toward peace, development and autonomy."

This was preceded by the Oct. 12 Covenant of Unification which both sides signed in Bangued.

Unification talks between the rival factions got under way after De Venecia's visit to Baguio on Sept. 15 when he told CPLA leaders that Congress would allocate P86 million for the integration program if they agreed to unify.

With the factions reunited, De Venecia said the process of screening and integrating the CPLA's armed regulars into the AFP would now get under way "to bring the fighting force of the region into the national mainstream."

Dalmas, commanding officer of the Abra-based 17th Infantry Battalion who represented the AFP at the ceremonies, said the "screening and processing" of the CPLA regulars would begin in Isabela province on Jan. 16 under the command of the 5th Infantry Battalion.

De Venecia said the ultimate objective was "to bring about peace and development" to the Cordillera region.

He said the P86 million for the CPLA integration program redeemed a promise he had made in 1998 which he could not fulfill after he lost in the presidential election.

Texters threaten new mass action

By Christian V. Esguerra

A TEXTERS' revolt is brewing in the world's texting capital, the Philippines, in the new year.

A consumer advocacy group, Txtpower, has warned of mass actions following the pending second cutback in the number of free text messages allowed by phone firms Smart and Globe.

"What a shame," Txtpower spokesperson Anthony Ian Cruz said of the approval by the National Telecommunications Commission of the 66 percent cut in free text messages allowed users.

This January's 33 percent cut in free text messages is the second cutback after the initial 33 percent cut in November last year.

"Yet again, the NTC has clearly betrayed consumer interest. If they cannot protect consumers, (NTC officials) might as well resign," he said.

Cruz said his group would take legal action to stop the cutback in free text messages. Globe and Smart have reduced to 50 the number of free text messages they allow subscribers from a previous high of 150 per month.

"We want to express our disappointment over the government's insensitivity and inaction over our complaints and views as consumers," Cruz said.

On Sept. 1, Txtpower staged a nationwide boycott that delayed the implementation of the free messaging cuts.

The group is also demanding a decrease in call rates, citing fast developments in cellular phone technology that should lead to price cuts.

Erratum

IN YESTERDAY'S front page article, "Political Museum: Looking back to know who we are," the head of the National Historical Institute (NHI) is Dr. Pablo S. Trillana III and not "Carlos Trillana III." Dr. Trillana is chairman and executive director, in OIC capacity, of the NHI and not its president.

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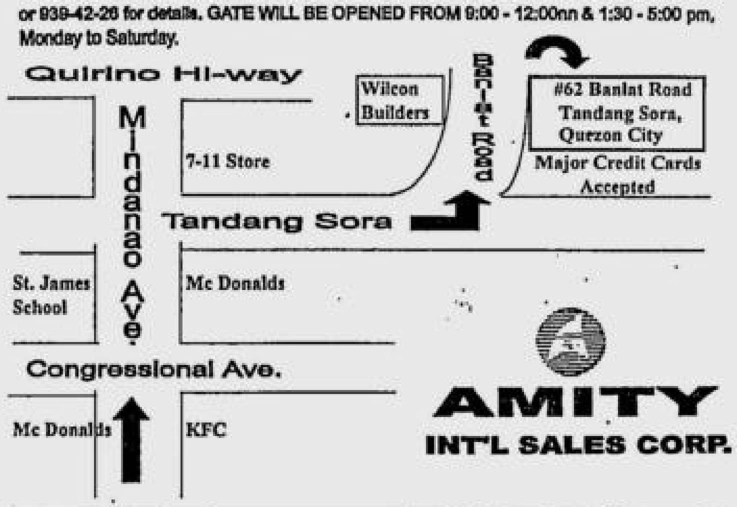

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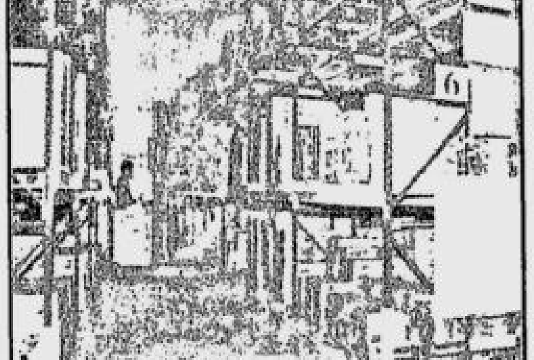

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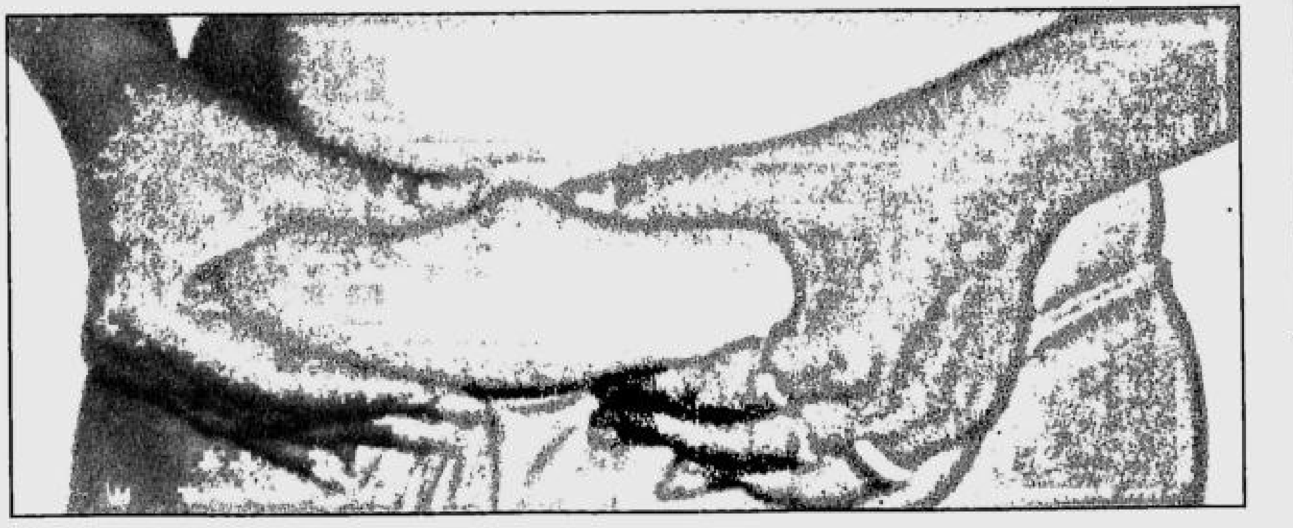

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Fewer injuries, deaths and less smog–DOH

(From page A1)

try," Dayrit said.

Only one fatality was reported this year compared with six last year.

Dayrit said the lower death toll and injuries also resulted from an improved information campaign and stronger police enforcement.

The health secretary said the number of people hit by stray bullets dropped by 42 percent from 36 last year to 21 this year and *watusi* poisoning declined by half from 4 to 2.

The campaign against firecrackers had an added benefit to residents of Metro Manila. There was less smog.

Recalling the morning of Jan. 1 last year, Director Edgardo Aglipay, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), said "it was hard to breathe before because of thick smoke (from firecrackers.) Today, the view is clear because there is less smoke."

As of 8 a.m. yesterday, 484 people were reported injured by firecracker blast from Dec. 21 to Jan. 1, according to the Department of Health (DOH). Last year, 1,325 people were injured or killed by firecrackers from Dec. 21 to Jan. 5.

Most of those injured belonged to the 10 to 20 age group, Dayrit said in a press briefing at the Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital. Of those injured by firecrackers, 26.8 percent were under the influence of liquor.

The lone firecracker-related death occurred in Cebu when a 29-year-old man lighted a "fountain" that exploded in his face. He died at the Vicente Sotto Medical Hospital.

A 28-year-old man also died from fire caused by pyrotechnics in Quezon City while a 56-year-old man from Cavite committed suicide by drinking a *watusi*-laced soft drink. The DOH does not count them as strictly firecracker-related deaths.

The number of injuries or fatalities could still go up as some people may have yet to be brought to the hospitals, according to Dayrit.

Tetanus

He said a number of people might still die of tetanus infection caused by powder burns.

"We'll be monitoring more the tetanus injuries in the aftermath of New Year's Eve. There are those who suffered minor injuries and were not brought to hospitals. They are in danger of dying from tetanus," Dayrit said.

He noted that last year "most of the fatalities were tetanus fatalities."

"So, the message that we want to project is to get those people who may have had minor injuries to go to the hospitals to be given anti-tetanus serum," he said.

He explained that tetanus was an "anaerobic infection." It grows in skin tissues where there is low oxygen.

"What happens when you have a blast injury is that the particles of paper and powder get into the tissue and if there are tetanus spores in the explosive, they will get inside the tissue. And if it's lodged deep in the tissue, the tetanus organism will multiply," he said.

Dayrit said the organism would cause people to have lock jaw and to experience difficulty in breathing, leading to death in three to five days from the onset of the infection.

Fatal shooting

In Metro Manila, the New Year's Eve celebration would have been peaceful were it not for the fatal shooting of Baron Cervantes in Las Piñas at 8 p.m. Monday *(See banner story)* and the firecracker explosion that hit the City Garden Hotel in Mabini, according to Aglipay. *(See story in Metro, Page A19.)* Three persons sustained minor injuries in the explosion.

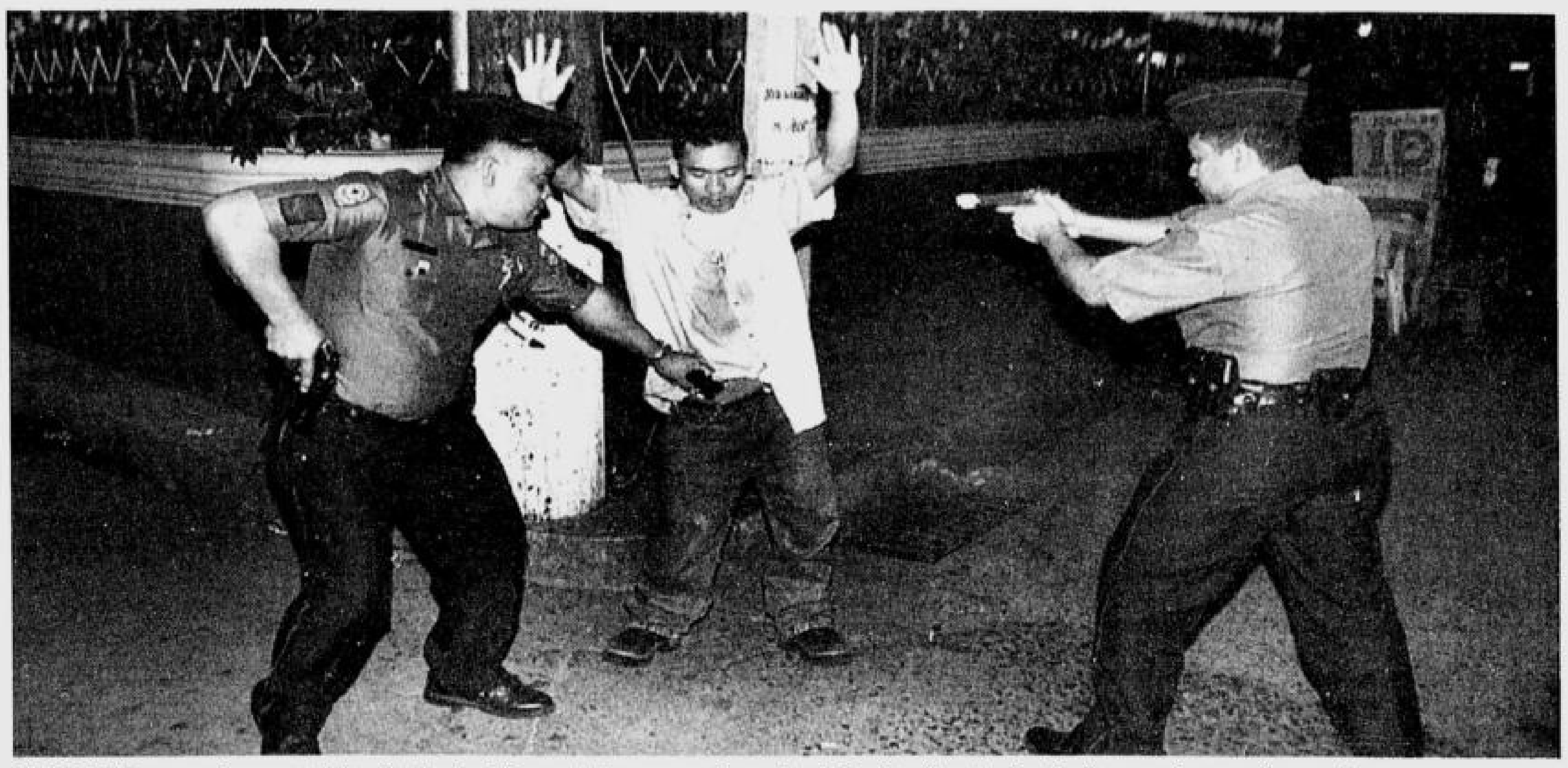
"As far as the celebration of New Year is concerned, it was peaceful except for the two incidents," Aglipay told reporters.

He attributed the generally peaceful situation in the metropolis to the Philippine National Police's "Oplan: Iwas Paputok" and the PNP chief's directive for policemen to seal the muzzles of their guns with tape to keep them from firing their guns.

Aglipay inspected the sealed service firearms of at least 20 members of the base police in the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame and found the tapes intact.

He called on the public to report policemen who fired their guns on New Year's Eve.

"I've ordered the chiefs of police where these incidents happened to visit those who were injured and to get statements from them, and if possible physical evidence, such as slugs, so we can match these with people who have licensed firearms," he added.



NEW YEAR caper of suspect Julius Nueles backfires as he's cornered by police in Ermita after stealing the firearm of a security guard. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Ten were arrested for indiscriminately firing their guns, according to Chief Supt. Crescencio Maralit, PNP spokesperson. One was an airport policeman.

Aglipay said he was still verifying reports that two policemen, one from Makati and the other from Marikina, had fired their guns on New Year's Eve. A policeman caught firing his gun could be dismissed from the service.

Fireman hurt

In eastern Metro Manila and Rizal province, at least 72 people, including a fireman, were hurt during the New Year's Eve celebration.

The fireman was identified as FO1 Braulio Villanueva, a member of the Eastern District Fire Unit. He sustained minor burns while fighting a blaze that gutted eight condominium units in Pasig City.

FO3 Zacarias Manaog, EFDU investigator, said the one-hour blaze, which started at about 12:11 a.m., broke out on the third floor of the four-story Building II of Caimito Ville in Valle Verde II, Pasig City. Initial investigation showed that an exploding firecracker caused the blaze.

Police authorities said 30 people sustained firecracker-related injuries in eastern Metro Manila, which consists of the cities of Marikina, Pasig, and Mandaluyong and the town of San Juan.

Twenty-five others were hurt in a number of vehicular accidents. Two were hit by stray bullets while six were stabbed. Tricycle drivers under the influence of liquor mostly caused the vehicular accidents.

Most of those hurt were brought to the Rizal Medical Center in Pasig City.

Davao City

The decline in firecracker-related injuries in the city was attributed to Mayor Duterte's ban on the selling and exploding of firecrackers. On Christmas Day, no one was reported injured.

Allen Valiente, the lone firecracker victim in Davao City, had picked up a lighted firecracker near his house at around 1 a.m. yesterday when it suddenly exploded.

Last year, 31 persons were injured and brought to the Davao Medical Center (DMC).

Some 40 people also spent the first day of 2002 in police precincts in the city after they were arrested for exploding firecrackers.

Duterte's campaign against firecrackers and firing of guns was noticed by no less than Ms Macapagal herself.

The President said on dzMM that Duterte should serve as an example to all local chief executives. Ms Macapagal said Duterte did the right thing in banning the sale of firecrackers.

Duterte said his crusade was not aimed at eradicating the Filipino tradition of welcoming Christmas and New Year with pyrotechnics.

The campaign against the sale of firecrackers came following the illegal repacking of pyrotechnic materials which caused a fire that razed several houses in Mini-Forest, Boulevard in Barangay 31-C on Dec. 6.

Congratulations

Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza also congratulated Duterte for the success of his campaign.

In Manila, Dayrit was also congratulated for achieving the DOH goal of cutting by half the number of firecracker-related injuries.

Besides the economic slowdown, the health secretary cited text messaging, sermons from priests and warnings from charismatic groups as the factors that led to the drop in the number of injuries.

He also credited the police for closing down illegal firecracker factories.

"The decrease is due to a combination of factors," Dayrit said.

Solgen says gov't not keen on $540-M SMC-Kirin deal

(From page A1)

"On its face, it will look favorable (to San Miguel). The problem is that we don't know if the investment will benefit all the stockholders or the (management) alone. There lies the difference."

Marcelo said a final decision on whether the government would support the sale would be formally announced after a meeting with chair Haydee Yorac of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II and Solgen officials on Jan. 2 and 3.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the solicitor general and the PCGG to "carefully study" the proposed deal, according to Marcelo.

Marcelo pointed out that the proposed deal "deserves a careful study" due to the amount involved. "Admittedly, this is a huge investment, which we welcome. On the macroeconomic level, this will help the economy. But the question still remains whether the huge investment will really stay in the Philippines."

Marcelo said Kirin officials might invest the $540-million abroad and not in "fixed assets like factories (and equipment)" in the country.

He said he was not even sure whether San Miguel, or the country as a whole, needed this kind of investment at this point. "That's why we need to review the deal."

Marcelo said top officials of Kirin, together with their financial consultant Charles Martin of the Deutsch Bank, met with Solgen and PCGG officials on Dec. 21 and submitted documents pertaining to the deal.

Asked whether the President would have the last say on the issue, Marcelo said: "I don't know. The President asked us to study it and make recommendations. But I understand that the PCGG is directly under the Office of the President. The Solgen (is involved) because it helps in the formulation of legal strategies."

Under the proposed deal, Kirin will buy 15 percent unissued shares of the country's top beer conglomerate. San Miguel and Kirin officials have agreed to observe a five-year lock-up period during which Kirin will vote with Cojuangco, which may help the businessman to maintain control of the company.

At present, the PCGG holds 27 percent of the sequestered shares of San Miguel acquired using coco levy funds while the Government Service Insurance System and the Social Security System control 11 percent of San Miguel shares, giving the government seven out of the 15 seats in the board.

The Cojuangco group controls San Miguel with a total of eight seats. Aside from the two seats belonging to Cojuangco, he was allowed to vote the shares representing three seats for proxies and another three seats as proxies for the retirement funds of San Miguel.

But Cojuangco's majority control of the company is being disputed since the government believes that his San Miguel shares were bought using coco levy funds.

Aside from the Kirin deal, the meeting scheduled for Jan. 2 and 3 will also tackle ways on how to go about the takeover of the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) by the PCGG. "Regarding the UCPB, we will discuss what follow-up legal moves to be done," said Marcelo, who stressed that the bank was acquired using coco levy funds.

Malacañang wants to take full control of UCPB following the Dec. 14 decision of the Supreme Court, which declared that coco levy funds are "prima facie (apparently) public funds."

The high court said the coco levies imposed on coconut farmers for 10 years during the martial law regime were "imbued with public character" as these were forcibly exacted from the farmers. A portion of the funds was used by Cojuangco to purchase UCPB, according to Marcelo.

The Supreme Court decision, though did not categorically declare the coco levies as public funds, has allowed the PCGG to vote the sequestered UCPB shares.

Grandma, 81 . . .

(From page A1)

dentures earned her the dubious distinction of being named the World Champion Liar for 2001.

"I'm 81 years old. I'm old enough. I should know better," Christensen said Sunday from her home in Exira, Iowa.

John Soeth, president of the Burlington Liars Club, awards the honor each year after sifting through hundreds of entries. The club received 384 entries this year, up from last year's total of about 280.

The contest was open to anyone who wasn't a politician—club members say it isn't fair to let professional liars compete. Those who enter must send the club a dollar for an honorary membership.

Christensen received a letter and a certificate from the club last week telling her she'd won the contest.

"The only thing that would be better would be if there were a monetary award to it," she added.

The club awarded eight honorable mentions including one to Kenneth Hunter of Dallas, Pennsylvania, who claimed that a town beekeeper had the world's most productive insects because he'd crossed honeybees with lightning bugs so they could work at night.

'Useless words'

But in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, focus was on "overused, misused and generally useless words and phrases" that ought to be banned, a US university said.

The media, politicians and advertisers all were skewered in this year's edition of Lake Superior State University's banned word list, compiled annually by its public relations staff from contributions sent from across the United States and Canada.

Beginning with the overused "disenfranchised," which contributor J.H. Jaroma said was too often used to refer to "voters who have experienced difficulty in following direction," to the euphemism "frigging" for a really banned word, the university's word police had a wealth of selections to choose from for its 27th annual list of words that should be banned.

Several words and phrases plucked from the list became objectionable due to overuse following the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States—shortened to "9-11" by too many, list-makers said—and the war in Afghanistan that followed.

'Digitalk'

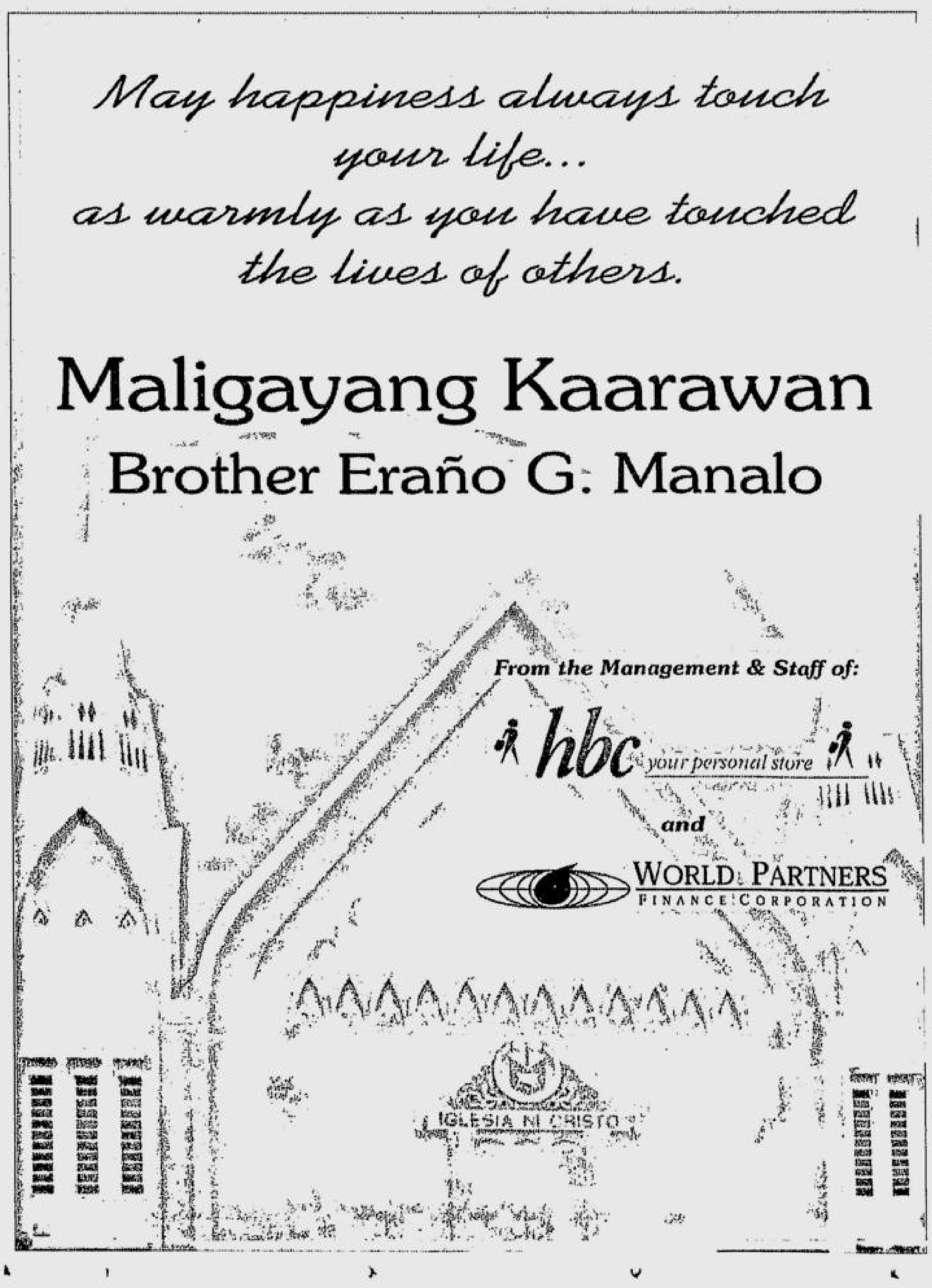
"Last year, we had Y2K and 24-7. This year, we have 9-11.

"This new digital language (digitalk?) should be banned . . . A tragic event of such proportion should not be confused with a telephone number," one contributor said.

The phrase ". . . then the terrorists win," often used to encourage Americans to return to normal life after the attacks, particularly bugged several list contributors.

"I can't imagine al-Qaida cares whether we attend parades," said one contributor from Chicago. "Sorry to have taken up so much space, but if I can't complain about things that bug me, then the terrorists will have won."

AP and Reuters



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Asean free trade zone becomes reality

AS EUROPE inaugurates its new common currency, the Euro, Southeast Asia is marking an economic milestone of its own in the new year—the creation of a 10-nation free trade area.

"It is a watershed that everybody should welcome," Rodolfo Severino, secretary general of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, said Monday.

"The overall vision is that of a region where goods and services, capital and people move freely," Severino said.

The Asean Free Trade Area (Afta), which officially went into effect on Jan. 1, had been under preparation for the past decade.

Getting an agreement on free trade initially proved to be a struggle because of the diverse economies and cultures of the group's 10 member-states.

Asean was the world's fastest growing region before the financial crisis of 1997.

Since then, member-governments have looked at the free trade accord as a way of reviving their economies and attracting foreign investments.

In the past three years, customs duties have plunged across the region of 523 million people to conform to the Afta goal of eliminating tariffs altogether.

The Afta agreement, however, allows its newer less-developed members several more years before dropping their customs barriers.

Some specific industries, such as Malaysia's Proton car manufacturer, will also continue to enjoy tariff protection.

Severino said Asean—which includes Brunei, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Burma, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam—must try to emulate the success of the European Union in fully integrating its members' economies.

"Asean must transform itself into a single market if it is to compete successfully and attract investments at a time of globalization and the economies of scale," Severino said.

But unlike the EU, which introduced its common currency on New Year's Day, Asean will not move toward monetary integration anytime soon.

"A common currency is something academics say would be a good thing and businessmen dream of. But how do you reconcile it with the desire of countries to control their own economic destinies?" Severino said.

"Eventually it will occur, but I don't foresee it in our lifetime," he said in an interview at Asean's Jakartá headquarters.

The 33-year-old organization has a tradition of avoiding political consolidation and moving forward very gradually on economic cooperation.

But with challenges posed by tougher competition from China, India and South America's Mercosur trading bloc, Asean governments have recently shown a greater willingness to cooperate in areas such as mutual investment agreements, streamlining bureaucratic procedures and improving transportation links. *AP*

REMINDER

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Lawyer still pushing for exile for Misuari

KUALA LUMPUR—The United States-based lawyer who claims to represent detained Moro leader Nur Misuari repeated yesterday appeals to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad to exert his influence and allow the renegade leader safe passage to a third country.

"Mahathir is a very strong leader and whatever he says goes. That is why I have been addressing my appeals to him," Elly Pamatong said.

"If there is anyone who can save Misuari, it is Mahathir, who is influential. Not the United Nations, not the OIC (the Organization of the Islamic Conference), not Malaysian courts," he told Agence France Presse.

Pamatong said he hoped the premier would be wise in deciding not to send Misuari back to the Philippines, a move the lawyer said was tantamount to a death sentence for the former regional governor.

"For the New Year, I pray for mercy from the Malaysian government not to send a Muslim brother to his death," Pamatong said.

Mahathir on Saturday had said Malaysia would not entertain a request from Misuari's family for safe passage to a third country.

"The appeal by family members is not for us to determine because this is our undertaking that anybody involved in such activities, we will not give shelter," Mahathir was quoted by the Bernama news agency.

The rebel leader's third wife, Tarhata Misuari, was allowed to visit him last Thursday for the first time since his detention.

Pamatong said Misuari's second wife arrived in Malaysia on Sunday and was awaiting approval from authorities to visit the rebel leader who became governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao after concluding a peace agreement with the government.

"I have drafted a request for the family and myself, as his lawyer, to meet with him but they (Malaysian authorities have yet to reply," Pamatong said.

Misuari's followers launched an uprising in Jolo in November in a futile attempt to derail elections that ended Misuari's five-year hold on the ARMM governorship.

Misuari fled after the short-lived rebellion, and was arrested with six followers off an island in Malaysia's Sabah state on Borneo island on Nov. 24. *AFP*

OFWs made it home for Christmas after all

By Norman Bordadora

DESPITE the global economic crunch and terrorist threats, more than 100,000 overseas Filipino workers made it home for the holidays.

Bureau of Immigration and Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration statistics showed the number of OFW arrivals topped the 100,000 mark a couple of days before Christmas and continued to rise through the rest of the holidays.

"Well, it's a Filipino tradition to be with family and friends, even in times of crisis," said Owwa Administrator Wilhelm Soriano. OFWs number some eight million, according to the Owwa.

The Ninoy Aquino International Airport was congested over the holidays as the OFWs flew in, giving a boost to the domestic aviation industry as well.

While there were no official statistics, observers at the airport noted heightened air passenger traffic to the provinces over the holidays.

"There were really a lot of our OFW's coming in and we had some congestion problems," said Naia General Manager Edgardo Manda.

With the huge number of OFW and other *balikbayan* arrivals, the local aviation industry closed out the year on a positive note following several months of decreased passenger traffic.

"During times like these, the flights are almost always fully booked and we, of course, have a longer than usual list of wait-listed passengers," said a Philippine Airlines employee at Naia Terminal 2.

The Department of Tourism's yearend report attributed the downturn in domestic aviation to the Abu Sayyaf Group's kidnapping spree in May and succeeding months last year.

"Tourist arrivals started to pick up in February 2001 after the international community saw some semblance of stability in the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo," the report read, "(but) it all started to go down in May 2001 when the Abu Sayyaf attacked the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan."

The local aviation industry then suffered a further slump after the Sept. 11 jetliner attacks in the United States.

While no statistics were readily available on OFW arrivals this time last year, the events in New York and Washington ensured fewer air travelers during the last holiday.

Hong Kong maids rally on New Year's Day

HONG KONG—Thousands of foreign domestic workers took to the streets here yesterday in a bid to persuade the government not to carry out a planned cut in their minimum wage.

Some 4,000 maids, mainly from the Philippines, rallied in Chater Garden in the financial district of Central to ask the government not to cut their wages by up to 20 percent.

As the territory hovers on the brink of a recession, the Hong Kong government has been considering cutting the minimum monthly salary from HK$3,670 ($470) to between HK$3,120 and HK$2,876 for a six-day working week.

Liza Diaz, spokesperson for the religious group "Jesus Is Lord," maintained "it was not a protest, but a prayer rally aimed at praying for the maintenance of the minimum wage."

She said the rally was "to appeal for the goodness of the Hong Kong government and its people" to acknowledge the vital role that foreign domestic workers have played in its economic prosperity.

The rally was led by Bishop Eddie Villanueva while the maids all wore red T-shirts to symbolize their unity.

Senior diplomats from the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Nepal have all urged Hong Kong not to implement the minimum wage cut.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has appealed to the Hong Kong authorities to impose less drastic cuts.

Hong Kong legislators have argued for a cut in the minimum wage on the grounds that the economic downturn has resulted in a fall in prices.

The minimum wage for foreign domestic helpers was cut by five percent in 1999 as a result of the Asian economic crisis and has been frozen ever since.

A total of 233,110 foreign domestic workers are employed in the territory, with Filipinos accounting for some 67 percent, or 155,330 of these. Indonesians number 66,970, Thais 6,940 and other nationals 3,870. *AFP*

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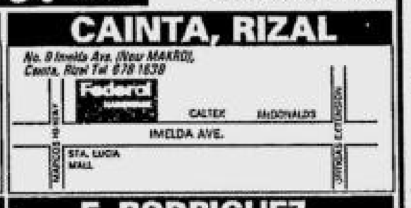

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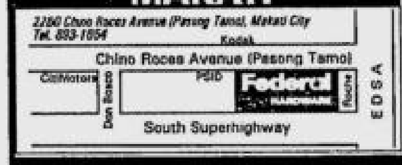

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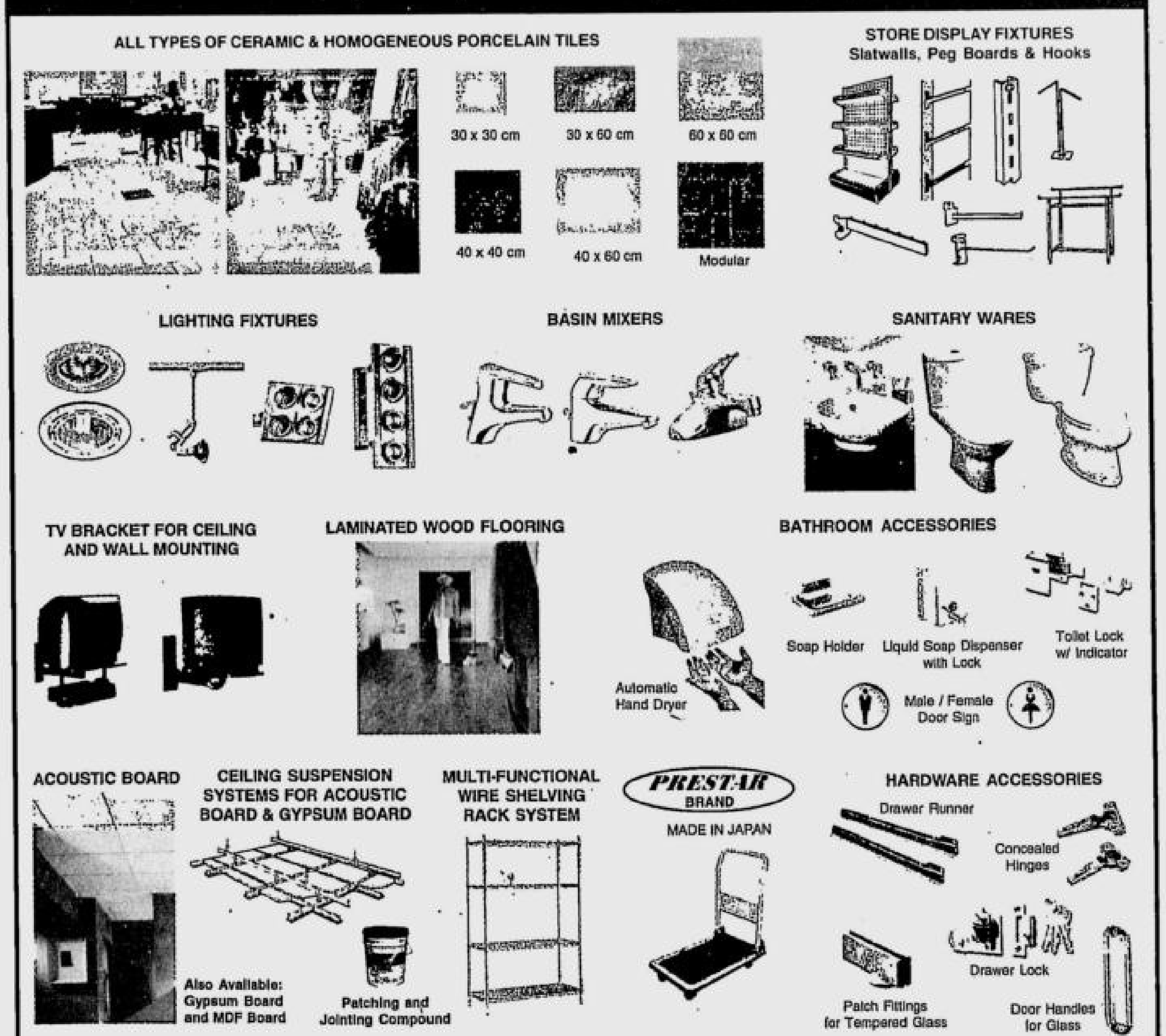

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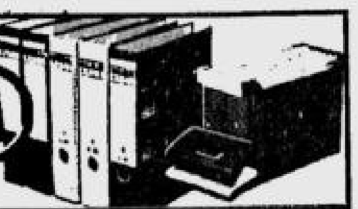

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OPINION

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Vol. 17 No. 25
ISSN 0116-2642

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The PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati • P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati City, Philippines • Our new telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments; Editorial Fax 897-4793, 897-4794; Advertising 897-4807; Circulation 527-33-42, 527-33-48, 528-01-83, 528-01-86 and 528-02-13, Fax: 528-02-34.

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EDITORIALS

Wan welcome

THE SIGNS are telling. Even the new year has lost its power to inspire optimism and hope. The rather wan welcome to 2001 was prefigured by the less than merry Christmas season, characterized by listless shopping and sallow celebrations. Or was it the other way around? Did the new year and its expectation of more despondency cast a shadow back at Christmas, spoiling it and infecting it with the virus of anguish and depression?

Perhaps the latter. As industry leaders and analysts admit, the Philippines and the world economy still have to feel the full impact of 2001's tumult. Several firms have severely downscaled growth targets next year. The World Bank has revised its growth projection for the Philippines to reflect the less than bright prospects of the economy. Filipinos should be content with that. Other countries in the region are worse off.

Even the most optimistic people in Asia can hardly be faulted for being less than joyous and optimistic about the new year. After all, the past year had had its share of lugubrious events that seemed to have worsened by the day. It is not that 2001 did not have its share of highs. But they came more as reactions to the lows. The apparent United States victory in Afghanistan and the setback it dealt against global terrorism are examples. They were satisfying developments. But they came in the wake of Sept. 11 whose impact continues to linger and whose trauma the world continues to reel from.

Not that the Philippines is new to traumas. It entered 2001 amid the political turbulence that was unleashed by the illegal gambling payoffs scandal engulfing the government of Joseph Estrada. It swiftly directed the turbulence to radical transition by kicking out the government and installing Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. However, the euphoria of the revolution was short-lived. Supporters of the deposed president tried to replicate the revolution and stormed Malacañang to reinstall the fallen leader. Although they failed, they put into grave doubt the political future of the country.

The doubt engendered by the May 1 storm and the trauma inflicted by Sept. 11 explain the cautious mood with which Filipinos greeted the new year. The mood can best be described paradoxically: the worst is over but the worst is yet to come.

Politics as usual

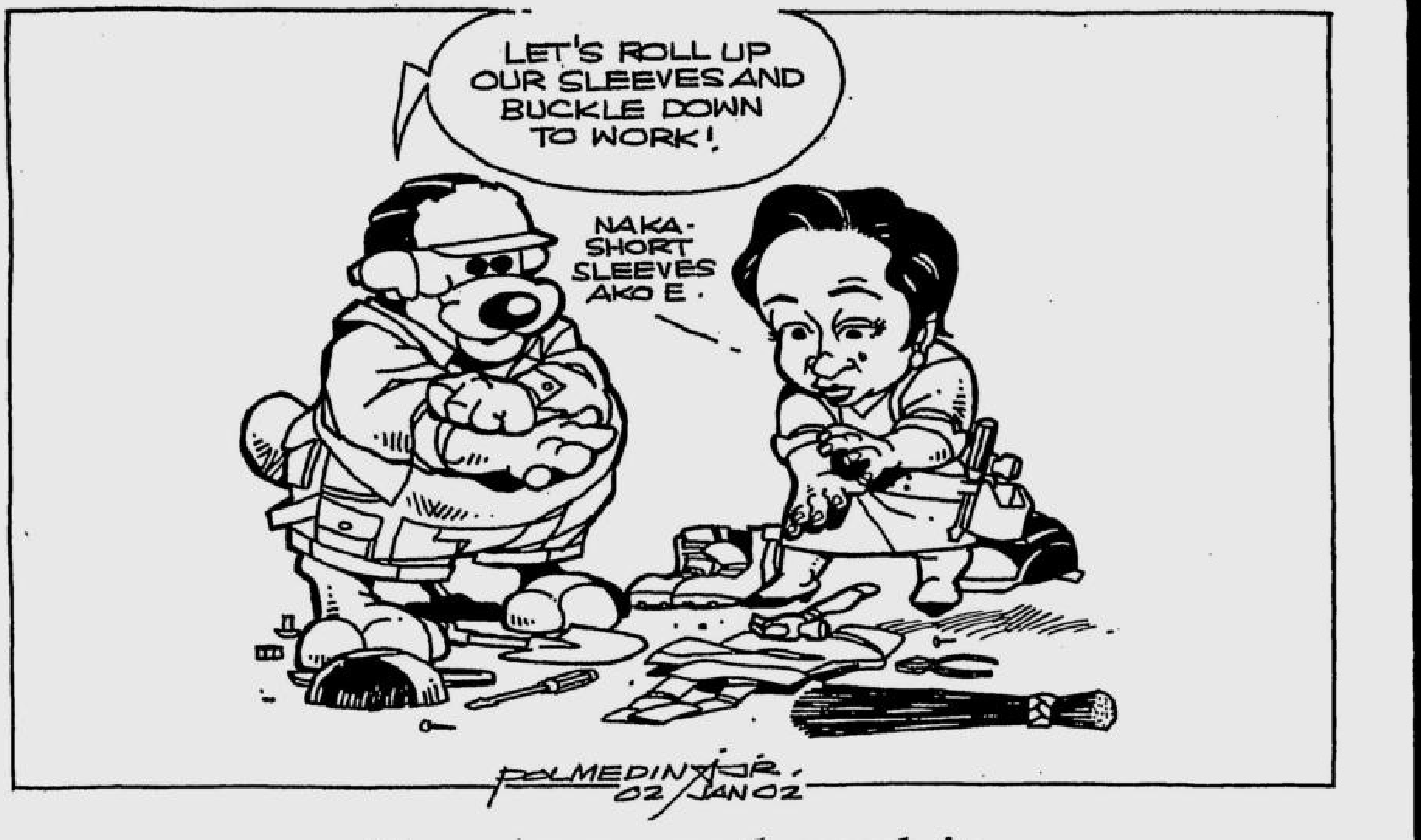
THE EVENTS in the past days have not been reassuring. They give the lie to any false optimism occasioned by the new year. Toward the end of 2000, 2001 had yet to make its uninspired entrance but politicians were already looking forward to 2004. Fidel Ramos, not exactly known for political subtlety, did not discourage suspicions he was eyeing another stint at the presidency despite the constitutional prohibition against presidential reelection.

Ditto with Joseph Estrada who is as eager to reclaim the post and the glory and power it affords. Hemmed in by one of her political sponsors (Ramos) and her nemesis (Estrada), President Macapagal was forced into the awkward position of trying to look nonchalant and unworried while not exactly giving up the prospect of winning the presidency by election, not succession.

Circumstances have therefore dictated that Filipinos will see more of the same politicking that has historically paralyzed and impaired it. The political mood, eager and unfaltering as ever, will ensure that 2002 will be rough sailing as ever, if not rougher and more debilitating.

The President does not have any choice. While guarding her political rear, she must appear business-like and no-nonsense. Her legendary tantrums and temper turns show she can be too no-nonsense for comfort. But that's for her political handlers to restrain and explain away. The important thing is that she buckle down to work. Her managerial savvy and her work ethic will at least ensure she does exactly that.

In fact, it would be best for the people to feel managerial and business-like as ever amid the sputtering economy and the incredible shrinking business regime. That will at least ensure that as politicians go about their business of advance electioneering and horse-trading, the country will continue to have a lease on life and a little hope. Let the politicians and the politicking have their merry ways as always. The people with their daily struggle and daily optimism will make the nation endure and even prevail.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Two rivers run through it

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I HAVE just come from an alumni reunion in my high school alma mater, St. James Academy (not to be mistaken for St. James School; the former was run by the Maryknoll Sisters, the latter by Jaime Torres) in Malabon City and I heard that roads will finally be built along both banks of the Tenejeros River which runs from the mouth of Manila Bay to Bulacan and Pampanga. I have repeatedly proposed the construction of these roads as they would answer many of the problems of the city.

Malabon is now hopelessly congested, with no more room for expansion. It had not always been like that.

Malabon used to be the best of both worlds. It was near enough to Manila and yet it retained its rural atmosphere—at least when I was growing up. It had wide open spaces—fishponds, rice fields, vegetable gardens. And it had two rivers, one running through the center of the city and the other separating Malabon from the municipality of Navotas.

These were the rivers that fed the numerous fishponds then—when they were clean and clear and unpolluted. They were the sites of the river processions during the town fiesta (like the fluvial parade in Peñafrancia and Bocaue), merrymaking during the feast of St. John the Baptist, and penitents bathed here before and after they flogged themselves in the streets of Malabon and Navotas every Good Friday. Many of the residents earned a living by fishing in these rivers. They were also the playground for many children. In villages beside them, children learned to swim almost at the same time that they learned to walk. Dense growths of mangrove lined the banks, for they protected the fishpond dikes during floods.

But now the rivers are just open sewers. Instead of mangroves, squatter shanties now line the banks; factories spew their effluents into the river. No fish can survive in them; no human can swim in them. Continuous dumping of garbage has made them shallow. River-grabbers are filling up portions of the rivers and claiming them as their own.

The water pollution has killed almost all the fishponds; the owners filled them up with dirt and sold them for residential housing. Imelda Marcos turned the biggest pond of them all, Dagat-Dagatan in Barangay Longos, into a low-cost housing project for squatters.

These fishponds used to be the catchment basins of runoff water during the rainy season and during very high tides. With them filled up and the rivers now shallow, there was no place for the water to go but into the streets and the yards. That is why Malabon is now like Venice after even just a slight rain during high tides.

Malabon has only two principal streets running parallel to each other. Although very narrow, vehicles are double-parked there at all times. There are almost no sidewalks. So you can imagine the traffic congestion and air pollution in its streets.

There is no more room for expansion except upwards. In fact, the new city hall is being built on what used to be a fishpond in Barangay Catmon.

Here's where the reclamation of the Tenejeros River along both banks to be turned into roads will solve many of these problems:

1. The new roads will provide people more space to move about.

2. The new roads will raise the value of land along them which, at present are only unsightly backyards. Thus, real estate collections of the city will rise.

3. The roads will prevent squatters from settling along the banks of the river. Likewise, the roads will prevent the throwing of garbage into the river.

4. It would be easy to prevent factories from clandestinely spewing their effluents into the river.

5. Dredging of the river for the reclamation for the road right-of-way will deepen it, thus providing more space for runoff water.

6. The roads will prevent unscrupulous persons from grabbing portions of the river.

7. It is hoped all these will finally put a stop to the regular flooding of Malabon.

8.This should revive the river. It would not be hard for the river to recover if only people and factories will stop throwing their waste into it. Fresh sea water flows into the river daily; it should carry away the remaining effluents when the tide goes out. The runoff from two or three rainy seasons should thoroughly clean the river.

9. With the river water clean again, river ferries from Manila to Bulacan and Pampanga can ply along the river carrying passengers and cargo as they used to do during the old days. Commuting would be that much easier.

Malabon is a perfect example of how development should **not** be, how urban decay begins, how slums are formed. Alas, the successive leaders of the city have had no vision for their hometown. It hardly deserves the name "city" at all.

But perhaps the two new riverside boulevards will change all that. The riverfront properties along these boulevards will be the best, the classiest, the most expensive properties in Malabon, Bulacan and even Pampanga.

I suggest a few Malabon leaders and planners make a quick trip to Sydney, Australia, and see its riverside boulevards. From downtown Sydney, a boulevard runs along both banks of the river out to the sea. The most beautiful, expensive and coveted homes line the riverbanks. Ferries from downtown sail along the river at all hours, even late at night. Residents can drive their cars to and from downtown, take the bus, or take the ferry.

Imagine a life like that for Malabeños. That is possible. All that is needed is for their leaders to have imagination and vision.

Freedom

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'VE always thought that if there was anyone who showed up the folly of colonialism—the moribund Spanish one and the burgeoning American one—it was Jose Rizal.

Rizal was not around when the Americans came. He had been shot to death by a Spanish firing squad in Bagumbayan a couple of years before, which had ironically brought forth the one thing he and his killers dreaded—a revolution. But his spirit hovered in the air after February 1999 as his physical presence had before December 1996. Or his genius did, resplendent in his novels and other writings, which were well known to Emilio Aguinaldo, Apolinario Mabini and the other revolutionaries.

Andres Bonifacio was also not around then: he had been executed—some say, murdered—by Aguinaldo's men following a hasty—some say, farcical—trial that found him guilty of treason. Unfortunately, unlike Rizal's, his spirit would not hover much at that point, only much later when it would be discovered and unleashed with a vengeance by the radicals.

But it was Rizal, or his spirit, who showed up the pretensions of "manifest destiny" or "white man's burden" which were America's justification for grabbing territories outside its borders after it had reached the end of its westward push in the Pacific Ocean. I don't know whom the Cubans and Puerto Ricans had, but we had Rizal. How a people that had produced the first truly global Filipino, someone who would soon find ardent admirers among Spaniards and Germans, could possibly be thought of as uncivilized, only the new colonizers knew. How a people that had produced the first truly democratic Filipino, one who had glimpsed the true dimensions of freedom, could possibly need tutelage, only their presumed tutors could say. Well, necessity and greed have never been known to recognize truth—or be deterred by it.

It's good to remember this next time you hear that the Americans introduced education, courtesy of the Thomasites, and democracy, courtesy of their rule itself. If anybody educated this country, it was Rizal most of all. He it was who vigorously espoused the cause of enlightenment, quite apart from producing works that led to it, demanding from his fellow Filipinos as much as he demanded from himself. And if anybody gave this country to understand democracy, or freedom, which is its core, it was Rizal most of all. What better argument is there for freedom than a genius willing to give up his life for it?

All this has convinced me more than ever that Rizal and Bonifacio, far from demanding our competing loyalties, demand our common one. They do not contradict each other—the one exhorting his people to rise against tyranny and the other exhorting them to rise above themselves—they complement each other. To put it simplistically, Bonifacio gave his compatriots to see what they should fight against, Rizal gave them to see what they should fight for. Bonifacio gave his compatriots to see "freedom from," Rizal gave them to see "freedom for."

It is simplistic in that Bonifacio did not lack for statements about the good life that was worth fighting for. He and Emilio Jacinto had their own concepts, if not always rigorously spelled out, of liberty, fraternity and equality, which were the guiding principles of the Katipunan. And Rizal did not lack for statements about the heavy yoke that needed to be lifted from the country, though he wasn't always sure how. That was what got him killed, the Spaniards recognizing the incendiary implications of his writings that went beyond his own intentions.

But I'd like to think of Rizal as having the more formidable, or influential, contributions to our understanding of "freedom for," or what we needed—and still need—to fight for. It's Rizal who showed that Filipino nationalism, then and now, is not just being against something, it is also—and very much so—being for something.

Foremost among the things he thought eminently worth fighting for was education. He taught that not just by exhortation but by example. Maybe he ended up having two minds about an armed revolution, maybe not, but what is clear is that he believed any revolution must first begin, or include, a revolution in the heart and mind. Any attempt to change the world must first begin with, or go alongside, an attempt to change oneself. It's something worth pondering in the light of a century of failed revolutions in this country. The Revolution of 1896 did not just owe to a terrible sense of oppression on the part of the Filipinos, it also owed to an awakened sense of pride in them. Credit Rizal (and the other propagandists) for that.

Just as well, Rizal showed that freedom meant nothing—or it wasn't really freedom—if it did not carry with it a sense of history and pride in one's patrimony. No one had a more acute sense of history than Rizal, which he showed not just in aphorisms about people who had no sense of the past having no future but in his laborious studies about the origins of his country. Without that vision of the past, he probably would not have been able to write "The Philippines: A Century Hence," which is his vision of the future. And no one had a more acute sense of patrimony than Rizal, which he showed as well not just in aphorisms about people who cannot speak their own language smelling worse than rotting fish but in his depiction of the foibles and virtues of the race the Spanish called *indios* but who had earned the right to call itself Filipinos. Without that appreciation for the legacy of the past, he probably would not himself have left as huge and lasting a legacy as he has.

And what better thing about freedom has Rizal taught us but that it is something you have inside of you, something no one may take away. You could be confined in the prison of colonialism or martial law and still be free. Free to excel, free to transcend, free to rise above your limitations. Free to become the best that you can be. Free to become a genius of the race.

Free to become a—Rizal.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

A Filipino-American winner

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

HONOLULU—So it has come to an end, this year of terror and trauma. It has become part of our collective memory, the closest this present generation has come to a wartime situation.

And it is time to welcome the New Year with all the resolutions and promises we can make. No doubt, the devastating effects of Sept. 11 (that date has become a code word for an evil omen or something) will continue to make the coming year grim. What's more, the war isn't over, pledges Mr. Bush. He seemed to have found his voice and his optimum "comfort level" talking about war, the war on terrorism that is. His war rhetoric, picked up by a gung-ho CNN, seems to drown his pronouncements on peace.

But war or no war, I believe in starting any new year on a high positive note. Fortunately, it wasn't hard to find one a few days ago in the world of art and he will be the subject of this commentary.

His name is Paul Pfeiffer, visiting in Hawaii, his original home. For those who don't know him, that's just another *"kano"* name of German ancestry. But for us who do, the mere mention of the name evokes images as dynamic as any new year could be. A simple boyhood in Honolulu. Life on Manoa Valley. Life among the Navajos in New Mexico. Art studies in San Francisco and New York. Where else could one's artistic talents be nurtured to their fullest expression? Exhibitions that would bring him international fame through Newsweek, New York Times and other publications. Venice. Berlin. Zurich. Munich. Istanbul. Name it—he's been there.

But one must add to these images a Philippine dimension: part of a childhood in Dumaguete, for Paul is part-Filipino. He has been to the Philippines, another of his "homes," many times on Fulbright grants, lectures and exhibits.

He is the middle son of the former Ruth Imperial of Silliman University and the late William Pfeiffer, professor of music at the University of Hawaii who authored several publications on Filipino music. Ruth, an accomplished pianist, teaches at the Leeward Community College in Honolulu. She regularly conducts the Silangan Singers, which she founded. I used to see Paul around as a young kid on their sprawling house on Manoa.

It's easy to say Paul inherited the artistic genes on both sides of his provenance. That might well be, but he would pursue his art and talent with intense determination over the years.

He finished his Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts at the famous San Francisco Institute in 1987. Moving to New York eventually, he earned his master's degree in Fine Arts from the equally prestigious Hunter College at the City University of New York in 1994.

He was the inaugural recipient of the Bucksbaum Award, presented every two years in recognition of exceptional achievement by a Biennial artist. His latest exhibit, which runs up to February 2002, marks the culmination of Paul's residency at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. It features, among others, "The Long Count," a three-part video installation based on computer software and existing footage of Muhammad Ali's three most famous fights, including the 1975 "Thrilla in Manila" against Joe Frazier.

But it was his Spring 2001 exhibit which is a bit hair-raising as we look back at what would happen to the World Trade Center the following September. Paul and his collaborators Lawrence Chua and John Letourneau put together a video called "Orpheus Descending," derived from Tennessee Williams' stage play about a musician's (Orpheus) ill-fated descent to the Underworld to rescue his wife Eurydice. After looking for a possible project site, Paul selected the "bowels" of the World Trade Center (WTC) in Lower Manhattan and the instantly visible twin towers. The foundations of the WTC were so deep and awesome that their excavations, probably reminiscent of the Panama Canal on a mini-scale, caused a huge landfill enough to create a whole new neighborhood on the west side. According to Tom Eccles, Public Art Fund director, "Pfeiffer chose this Niagara of urban passageways not just for the vast numbers of people that pass through it every day (about 700,000), but also for what this concentration suggests about the connections between urban and organic rhythms." A kind of Brave New World, Eccles adds, to which workaday life remains oblivious.

Who could tell then that shortly after this uncanny exhibit, its site would become a completely shattered memory? What's even more uncanny was what Paul himself said when he was conceptualizing the project. The "Orpheus Descending" video "is made specifically for an audience that passes through the World Trade Center every day, has been doing for so many years, and may continue to do so for many more years." The piece, he added, "is very much about death—death being synonymous with the consciousness of the passing of time." Words of strange foreboding, almost foreshadowing the destruction that was to come.

Another information of shock value is that up until 1999, Paul had an art studio on a high floor in one of the twin towers. He was one of 12 young artists who received grants from an art patron which enabled them to work in the towers. Just the thought of what might have been for this talented artist is enough to make your stomach turn.

Lest I have given the impression that Paul's art is on the morbid side, his other works celebrate culture, race, gender, ethnicity, Asia, America and other aspects of diversity. He was one of several Filipino-American artists featured in "Kayumanggi Presence 93: Diversity and Emergence, Filipino Artists in the '90s" at the Academy Art Center in Honolulu.

We who have known him feel very proud of his achievements. The Philippines as a whole should feel equally proud. At a relatively young age of 35, he is already world-class.

Belinda A. Aquino is professor of Political Science and Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she is also director of the Center for Philippine Studies.

Our common humanity

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"THE STRUGGLE for the Soul of the 21st Century" is the title of a talk delivered last Dec. 14 by former US President Bill Clinton in London. The talk was part of a lecture series sponsored by BBC which later broadcast his speech.

I'm reprinting the conclusion of Clinton's talk, if only to provide food for thought on how the rest of the world could best respond to the lingering challenges left by last year's tumultuous events. This is Bill Clinton on how best "to live" the challenge to our shared humanity in these days of uncertainty:

So this is a fight we have to make everywhere, which brings me to my last point, and the most important thing of all—although it may sound naïve to you. What this is all about is that simple question: Which will be more important in the 21st century—our differences or our common humanity? This encounter we have had with the Taliban and Mr. Bin Laden and the al-Qaida and all the debate that has filled the airwaves since, has given us a picture of this debate and of the very different ideas we have about the nature of truth, the value of life, the content of community. Like fanatics everywhere throughout history, these people think they've got the truth, and if you share their truth, your life has value. And if you don't, you're a legitimate target, even if you're just a 6-year-old girl who went to work with her mother at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11th…

* * *

NOW most of us believe that no one has the absolute truth. Indeed, in our societies, the most religious among us sometimes feel that most strongly because we believe as children of God, we are by definition, limited in this life, in this body, with our minds. That life is a journey toward truth, that we have something to learn from each other, and that everybody ought to have a chance to make the journey…

This is not complicated. The people that want to kill us over our differences do so because they think their life doesn't matter except insofar as they are different from and better than others. Those of us who are trying to change ourselves and change them, we think our common humanity is more important and if we could just live up to its potential, the world would be a better place. And which side wins will shape the 21st century.

* * *

WHAT do you think is more important? The answer is easy to give, but very, very hard to live. Think about this as you go home tonight. Think about how important your differences are to you. Think about how we all organize our lives in little boxes—man, woman, British, American, Muslim, Christian, Jew, Tory, Labor, New Labor, Old Labor, up, down—you know, everything in the world…Our little boxes are important to us. And indeed it is necessary, how could you navigate life if you didn't know the difference between a child and an adult, an African and an Indian, a scientist and a lawyer? We have to organize that, but somewhere along the way, we finally come to understand that our life is more than all these boxes we're in. And that if we can't reach beyond that, we'll never have a fuller life. And the fanatics of the world, they love their boxes and they hate yours. You're laughing, that's what this is all about. And it's easy to give the right answer but it's hard to live.

When I was my daughter's age, just about to embark on my great adventure in England, just before that Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, two of the heroes of my youth, were murdered by their fellow Americans for trying to reconcile the American people to each other. Gandhi, the greatest spirit of the age, murdered, not by an angry Muslim but by a fellow Hindu because he wanted India for the Muslims and the Jains and the Sikhs. And the Jews and the Christians. Sadat—murdered not by an Israeli commando, but by a very angry Egyptian—a member of the organization now headed by Bin Laden's number two guy—an angry Egyptian. Because how could he be a good Egyptian or a good Muslim because he wanted secular government in Egypt and peace with Israel, though he got the desert back. And one of the people I have loved most in my increasingly long life, Yitzhak Rabin, was murdered not by a Palestinian terrorist, but by a very angry young Israeli Jew who thought he was not a good Jew or a good Israeli because he wanted lasting peace for Israel through the recognition of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians for a homeland. And that guy who murdered him got exactly what he wanted—he derailed and delayed the peace process and let it be swarmed and mauled by all those people who were under the foolish illusions that their differences matter more than the fact that they are all the children of Abraham.

* * *

SO that's what I want you to think about. It's great that your kids will live to be 90 years old but I don't want it to be behind barbed wire. It's great that we're gonna have all these benefits of the modern world, but I don't want you to feel like you're emotional prisoners. And I don't want you to look at people who look different from you and see a potential enemy instead of a fellow traveler. We can make the world of our dreams for our children, but since it's a world without walls, it will have to be a home for all our children. Thank you very much.

What to do with a million pesos

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

WITH A LOT of time on my hands the last few weeks of 2001, I found myself watching all the TV game shows that offer at least a million pesos as a jackpot prize. I have since given up on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" because the questions have become rather complicated. In the first season the questions were so simple I was tempted to join and take, as my lifeline, our editor in chief who could be helped by the entire INQUIRER editorial staff. My psychological problem was the fear that I get eliminated at P2,000 with a question like: "What is the real name of Judy Ann Santos?" Worse, the show could allow me to reach the million-peso stage only to stump me with a question on chronology of the pharaohs, topography of the brain, or the history of early Hungarian cabinet-making. Answering questions in these fields will prove my erudition or capacity for trivia.

I was flattered that one of the questions at a recent episode of "The Weakest Link" was, "*Sino ang* author *ng* 'Rizal Without the Overcoat'?" The contestant's wrong answer? "Marilou Diaz-Abaya." While this show has really intelligent questions, the problem is that nobody wins the jackpot and everyone is insulted along the way. Its not worth the trouble. My best bet seems to be the noontime game shows which are really bent on giving away the cash but I might be distracted by the backdrop of gyrating bimbos.

Finally, I settled on Kris Aquino's "Game Ka Na Ba?" which seemed to be one I will feel comfortable in. As an INQUIRER columnist herself, would Kris throw me a hint or two when I get a difficult show-biz or basketball question? What stopped me from joining was that the show's organizer required an interview with the contestant's family to see how one will spend the million-peso jackpot. Some said they will bring the entire clan for a shopping spree at Rustan's supermarket, use the money to set up a small-scale business, buy a pedicab, send someone through college, or buy a computer. If the organizer interviews my sisters, one will want a limited edition Louis Vuitton bag, the other will want sparklers from Bulgari. Now, I want a Cartier Tank watch. My sisters were worried that the million-peso jackpot would not be enough. Worse, Kris would probably be the only one on the show who could relate to my sisters' fashion needs.

I may never get the million-peso prize offered on TV but watching all these shows gave me a lot of perspective. A million pesos is valued differently by different people. It can mean an escape from poverty or just a bad night at the casino. A million pesos can buy education and food for a large family or be a day's losses in the stock market. Instead of being sorry for what one does not have, why not be grateful for everything that you now have? Life alone is worth more than a million pesos. All these reflections brought me back to our heroes and what they would do with a million pesos. Emilio Aguinaldo on his flight from Malolos to Palanan, once dreamed of being away from the war, enjoying shopping and the good life in Europe. Some historians have criticized him for being frank but the late Teodoro Agoncillo used to say, "You can't blame a man for dreaming."

In September 1892, Marcelo del Pilar wrote his wife Tsanay asking her to remit some money as he needed $25. Could they pawn a fishpond in Baluarte? In history textbooks, we are told that Del Pilar had to collect cigarette butts from the streets of Madrid to maintain his nicotine fix. This man really needed a million-peso jackpot. If he had had money maybe La Solidaridad and the reform movement would have had greater impact. Andres Bonifacio would probably have bought arms and ammunition that would have turned the tide of the Philippine Revolution of 1896. For most of our heroes we have to speculate, but for Jose Rizal who won the second prize in a lotto draw in 1892, we know how it was spent. The jackpot was worth P20,000 and was split three ways between Rizal, a certain Francisco Eguilor and Ricardo Carnicero, politico-military governor of Dapitan. Rizal did not buy the entire ticket and so had to share his winnings. Rizal invested his money in a house and coconut plantation.

In two reports to Manila, Carnicero wrote:

"Rizal already bought a piece of land here, which, though of little value, is beautiful. It is along the beach and has a fair number of fruit trees…The land is very extensive, and in the part which had been cultivated by its owners for many years and which shortly after they abandoned alleging that wild hogs and monkeys ate everything they planted, he found more than 60 cacao trees, some coffee trees and many fruit trees of some value. For this reason he is quite contented and says that he does not want to engage in anything else except farming…he believes his land will yield him a net profit of 2,000 pesos annually. It has cost him 18 pesos…"

When you visit the beachfront Rizal Shrine in Dapitan today, you can see how Rizal won the lotto twice by investing well. I often imagine people ruined by a million-peso windfall if they are ill-prepared for it. I will never turn down a million pesos—but having perspective determines whether the pot of gold brings fortune or misfortune.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@pusit.admu.edu.ph

The gift of friends

HIGH BLOOD

Sister Amparo, O.P.

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —**Ed:**

IT was Christmas Day. And the king sat upon his throne to receive the gifts of his people. They brought freely their arts and beauty of their wisdom. All but one stood without the throng with bowed head and thoughtful mien. So it came about that when all had given but the one, the king turned to him. "And where is thy gift?"

"I have neither gold nor silver, beauty nor wisdom. But I can give you only my heart…which is friendly, because it is full of faith, which is happy, because it is free of malice, which is peaceful, full of hope. Of that I can only give you…but of such as I give to you both willingly and freely, for my store is unlimited."

And the king bade the man to sit beside him on the throne, saying "Thine be the honor of having brought me the richest and rarest gift in all the world…a friend!"

Life is sweet because of the friends we have made and the things in common we share. We want to live on, not because of ourselves, but because of the people who care. It is in giving and doing something for somebody else. When you sum it all up, life's splendor and joy are found in friendships. For friends, even if few, are dear and their love is sincere.

A dear old lady was asked what she uses in making her complexion so beautiful and her whole being so bright and attractive. She answered in short, "I use for my lips, truth; for my voice, kindness; for my eyes, compassion; for my hands, charity; for my figure, uprightness; for my heart, love. And for anyone who does not like me…'prayer.'"

And now, let me share with you this prayer:

So I said a prayer for you today, and know God must have heard.
I felt the answer in my heart. Although He spoke not a word.
I didn't ask for wealth or fame, I know you wouldn't mind.
I asked Him to send treasures of a far more lasting kind.
I asked that He'd be near you at the start of each new day,
to grant you health and blessings and friends to share your way.
I asked for happiness for you in all things great and small.
But it was for His loving care I prayed the most of all!

We thank the unknown writers of these messages. And also I thank you so much for listening!

Sister Amparo, O.P. is 90 years old.

The coconut as RP's most controversial tree

COMMENTARY

Cesar A. Villariba, Ph.D.

THE COCONUT industry has been around for more than a hundred years. It has weathered a series of crises. It has had its ups and downs. No, it does not qualify as a sunset industry. With the right policy, the industry will continue to be the mainstay of our economy.

In the late '60s, the FAO came out with the observation that the coconut farmers were not getting their rightful share of the fruits of the industry. The traders, processors and exporters were getting richer but the farmers were the ones getting the crumbs. And so the bright boys of the industry conceived of the coco fund (Republic Act 6260) to raise P100 million for the Coconut Investment Co. designed to vertically integrate the industry. This means that the coconut farmers will be participants in all activities of the industry from production to the marketing of high-value coconut products.

That was in 1971. The Cocofed since then expanded into 950 municipal and 58 provincial chapters with a total membership of 1,700,000.

In 1973 prices of fats and oils, particularly the laurics (coconut and palm kernel oil) skyrocketed. Everybody went into the exportation of coconut oil and coco meal and for a time set aside the domestic production of cooking oil and other consumer coco products. There was a crisis in cooking oil. The main implementor of martial law gave the coco industry 72 hours to solve the crisis. Presidential Decree 276, the Prize Stabilization Law, came into being. That was the second levy.

Originally the second levy was for subsidy. But developments in the industry led to the integration of the first and the second levy and was referred to as the CIIF or Coconut Industry Investment Fund which established the UCPB, Cocolife, Cocochem, six major oil mills, and with a split in the Houses of Zobel and the Ayalas, a big chunk of San Miguel Corp. was sold to the CIIF. All told, the four-and-a half billion-peso investment of the CIIF has now ballooned to some P130 billion. Dividends for the 1,700,000 investors were withheld by the Presidential Commission on Good Government, trustee of the sequestered coco-levy funded corporations.

The depressed prices of CNO resulted in the clamor of small farmers to get their due share of the bonanza. During the Estrada administration, SMC chair Danding Cojuangco, Cocofed president Caling Lobregat, with Cardinal Vidal participating, came out with a formula on how the buko pie from SMC could benefit the farmers. The formula, to our mind, was a good one. But then came Edsa Dos and the well-crafted resolution was aborted.

Lately, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo received a resolution formulated by Archbishop Fernando Capalla, Cojuangco, Lobregat, Dante Ang and nine leaders of coconut organizations. It was just as good as the former formula and very doable. But the new chair of the PCGG judged it as illegal and immoral but conceded that the major consideration is the greatest good for the coconut farmers.

The latest formula is the use of P700-million SMC dividends as support price. The PCGG and the President's men appear to like the idea.

Just how much support will come from the P700 million will have to be determined. Our experience with the coconut industry tells us to consider the following reality: one kilo of copra should fetch one kilo of rice. If one kilo of rice is worth P18, then one kilo of copra should give the farmer P18. At present, the price of copra is P10 per kilo. The support price should be P8.

And if we are not burdening the government with a utopian formula, may we recommend that 1,500,000 farmers be covered by Cocolife with a life insurance of P50,000 instead of the present P5,000 policy that many of them have?

But when all is said and done, another reality to consider in making our coconut industry truly competitive is this principle: The difference between a productive farm and a marginal farm is in the **farmer**. Place a farmer in any farm and with his *sipag, tiyaga at talino*, he will convert the farm to one that is really competitive.

Cesar A. Villariba, Ph.D., was chair-administrator of the PCA from 1971-1975. He is director of the Philippine Coconut Research and Development Foundation and dean emeritus of the Enverga University.

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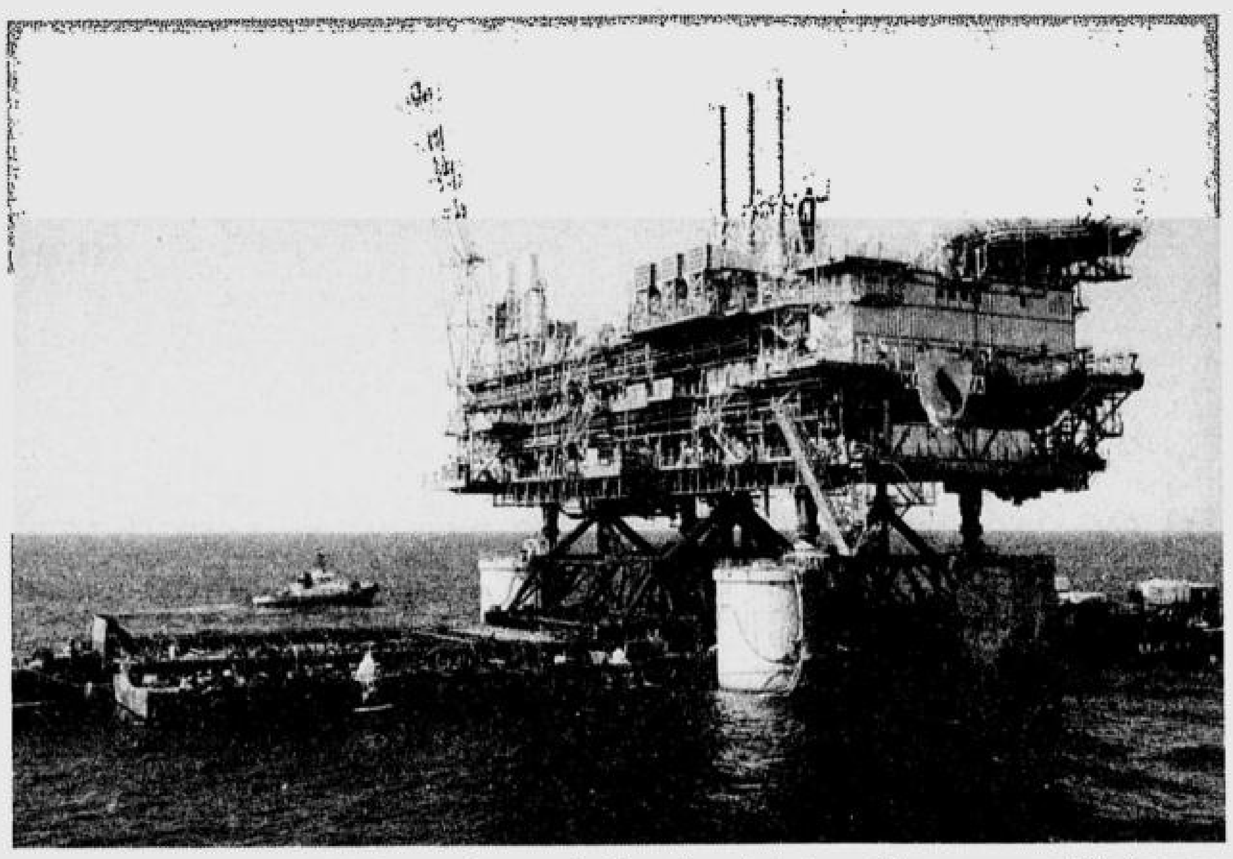
Have we gotten best deal in Malampaya?



THE PHILIPPINE government has been played for the fool by Shell and Texaco. The government will be paid peanuts for the extraction of gas from the Malampaya gas field. The Philippine National Oil Co. will receive only 10 percent of the annual gas revenues.

As property owner of the Malampaya gas field, the government has the sovereign right and power to compel lessees to pay its rightful share of gas revenues. Countries like Colombia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Ecuador, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Nigeria, Venezuela, Gabon and Congo receive 50 to 80 percent of oil and gas revenues as royalty tax (Mason Gaffney, "An Inventory of Rent-Yielding Resources—Appendix 1, The Losses of Nations, 1998").

From discovery date to extraction, the gas field appreciates in value. The appreciation is a legitimate source of taxation. And so is gas unit-of-production rent charges per cubic foot upon extraction.

Unfortunately, the hot air balloon of a government is blissfully ignorant of what it is surrendering to private pirates.

Taxing 50 percent of estimated gas revenues of $130 billion over the next 20 years yields the government $65 billion. This alone gives the government at least $3.25 billion or P169 billion per year. The amount corresponds to 21.6 percent of the government's proposed 2002 budget of P781 billion.

It should not tax anyone's brains so much to imagine to what heights the Philippine economy will soar if government grants labor and capital an across-the-board tax relief worth P169 billion.

I strongly urge Congress to investigate and reform the criminal and cavalier treatment of the country's patrimony. Why does the government allow itself to be screwed by gangsters in business suits? Why are the people's pieces of property and assets blithely given away by government bureaucrats?

Why are so many Filipinos poor and desperate, while a few are filthy rich? The Malampaya gas field swindle provides the reason. This must stop.—**ALLAN P.E. TOLENTINO, Unit 9 Cosmopolitan Corner, Condominium B, Gonzales corner Avelino Streets, Xavierville II, Loyola Heights Quezon City**

LETTERS

Restoring sanity in our streets

CHRISTMAS is supposed to be a time for peace and spreading goodwill around. But last week, as I was driving away my BMW from a parking slot at my office on Scout Borromeo, a green Jaguar came up behind me and honked its horn to stop me from backing out of the driveway. Through an open window, the driver scowled at me as if to challenge me if I continued to back up. To avoid any trouble, I moved forward to give him space in the spirit of Christmas.

Christmastime or not, such incident happened to me not once but many times in our crazy roads where drivers have no courtesy at all.

May I call on the Land Transportation Office and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and police agencies to start an intensive drive to enforce traffic laws and regulations and ensure safe and comfortable traffic flow in our streets. Our law enforcers must not be corrupt so that violators do not escape fines and sanctions. But if the violators are corrupt, the traffic enforcers become corrupt too, and vice versa.

For the year 2002, we hope to restore sanity in our streets.—**CESAR S. UMALI, chair, God Save the Philippines Movement, 30 Scout Borromeo St., South Triangle, QC**

Do more people want to bear arms?

THIS past year saw a dramatic increase in the number of communities and sectors demanding the right to arm themselves against lawlessness.

First were the residents of Lamitan, Basilan, as protection against the Abu Sayyaf. Then the Department of Interior and Local Government started recruiting more civilian agents to combat kidnappings in Chinatown. Then, Manila Councilor Julio Logarta filed a proposed ordinance allowing barangay chairpersons in his city to tap licensed gun owners as an auxiliary security force. Ethnic minorities in Davao Oriental requested that their governor give them crude homemade shotguns to protect themselves against the National People's Army. Finally, Catholic priests in Mindanao have been obtaining guns to protect themselves and their churches against kidnap and robbery gangs.

Yet, why do the media sweepingly report that all these events were moves to arm civilians against lawlessness? The implication is that the government would provide guns to civilians and abdicate its crime-fighting functions. How can the media be careless in their stories so often?

First, the barangay security force pushed by Logarta and the Catholic priests in Mindanao, are already armed or are presently buying legal guns. The Basilan folk want the government to allow them to possess guns. None of these groups are asking the government to give them guns. The only ones who asked the government were the tribal folk in Davao Oriental. Since our national policy is to uphold the rights of ethnic minorities, especially when they're about to be annihilated, their appeal should be heeded.

Lastly, since apparently they know so much about the "Wild, Wild West," can the media and Manila Councilor Don Ramon Bagatsing tell us what role deputies of sheriffs posses in taming the "Wild, Wild West"? This is the same process being implemented in the DILG recruitment and the Logarta proposal. Law enforcers—and they include barangay chairpersons—have the right to require law-abiding civilians to assist them in their duties and when so deputized, a person is no longer a civilian, but a lawman in his own right.

Both the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation have always had civilian agents, so why does hiring more constitute "arming civilians"? And for the first time, private gun owners under the Logarta proposal have a chance to really be of service to the community, rather than spend most of their time at the firing range. So, why buck the proposal?

We in the Peaceful, Responsible Owners of Guns (ProGun) have always believed that anti-gun sentiments and the drug LSD have the same effect on supposedly intelligent minds: they both addle the brain and cause them to spew forth gibberish.—**MANNY MOLINA, vice president, Peaceful, Responsible Owners of Guns (ProGun), 3rd Floor, P.B. Dionisio Bldg., Roces Avenue, South Triangle, QC**

Not only priests need weapons

THIS pertains to the article titled "Arming of priests rejected" (PDI, 12/17/01) which proposal, according to Rev. Antonio Franco, papal nuncio, was a crazy idea, because it is not sanctioned by the Church.

To my mind, in the midst of lawlessness, it is high time that not only the priests assigned in troubled areas like Basilan, Sulu or Zamboanga should be allowed by the authorities to carry firearms to defend themselves against kidnappers, terrorists and other criminals, but also civilians who have licensed firearms should be allowed to carry them outside their houses.

May I suggest that only qualified persons who have passed rigid tests and requirements be allowed to carry their firearms outside of their homes to protect themselves.—**ANTONIO B. BORJA, 23 G. del Pilar St., Dayangdang, Naga City 4400**

Be kinder to animals, too

I JUST wanted to express my gratitude to Neal H. Cruz for writing an article in support of animals and expressing his disgust at those who abuse animals. It's time we all started showing more compassion to those who cannot speak for themselves. If we can learn to love animals we can learn to love one another as well.—**LORI CHRISTMAN, loralei2@hotmail.com,**

Good economics in religious tenets

PRIMA facie, it looks awkward to link a great spiritual leader to the realm of economics. It is almost blasphemous, heretical. But it is not. When Christ urged us to love one another and to do unto others what we want others to do unto us, He laid the foundation of a socio-economic order for our material prosperity besides the spiritual.

If we love one another, the crime rate would drop to zero and save for the country over P200 million for the maintenance of peace and order. The Department of National Defense would save over P500 million in terms of salaries, equipment and retirement benefits. All these savings would go to manufacturing and agriculture and employ the displaced government employees.

The improved peace and order situation would boost the tourism industry and the flow of capital investment from abroad.

Filipino Christians and Muslims have the political and spiritual will to love one another. They call each other *"igso"* meaning brother. There are striking similarities in the Holy Bible and the Holy Koran. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is duty-bound to launch a program of moral regeneration and supply the missing factor in her "new economics and new politics."

We cannot fight graft and corruption even if we double the budget for the Department of Justice. Billions in public funds are lost in scams and irregularities. These losses can be reduced by a well-planned moral rejuvenation through the Department of Education and an information department with the cooperation of the ecumenical churches.

Never in our history have we had a greater need for a review and a return to Christian principles than today. We cannot discount the efforts of the Couples for Christ, the Holy Rosary Crusade and the Knights of Columbus. But these movements have merely scratched the surface.

A weeping Virgin Mary said Satan has entered the Church. The devil has also successfully entered the different branches of government. The broadcast and print media are doing their part with religious programs, discussions and prayers. But there's nothing better than an organized moral and religious regeneration program with an appropriate budget from the Church and State.—**MARIANO FLORDELIS, 414 P. del Rosario Ext., Cebu City**

Filipinos, not Erap's son, deserve pity

I FIND utterly unbelievable the gall and the posturing of the country's hopelessly deranged political figures. I specifically refer to the recent report about JV Ejercito where he says he misses his imprisoned father. But Joseph Ejercito Estrada is accused of corruption. Justice must be served. And he must pay for his sins to the country and to the people.

Erap's dubious presidential policies, his system of non-governance, his cronies and cohorts, mistresses and children—all contributed to further reinforce the economic ruin and incessant politicking that our country has long suffered. The economy degenerated, workers were laid off, the poor people suffered, the national debt grew bigger.

And while we redeemed ourselves in Edsa II, we cannot forget that JV's posturing and rabble-rousing of the poor was one of the reasons that drove them to march all the way to Malacañang in what can be considered the most disgusting and misguided protest march ever in our history. For what? To free a crook and wreak havoc on the country again?

The ensuing downturn in business forced me, a seasoned executive, to seek greener pastures abroad. I am 14,000 miles away from my family right now. My work is mainly blue-collar. I pick up the dirt of the Americans. And the irony is that neither I nor anyone else in my family is a crook. I am forced to live abroad away from my family because JV's father, and many of his father's friends and innumerable families, ran our country so badly that no self-respecting national leader can ever hope to gain prosperity for the country. Not in this generation, or the next. It will not happen. Erap is part of the lineage of corrupt politicians whose pedigree begins with Ferdinand Marcos. But that is another forgotten story.

But JV misses his father. Big deal. He can cry all he wants if that will make him feel better. He can visit him every day and spend quality prison time with him if he wants. And why not imprison JV as well? And at the end of the day, the fact remains that Erap is accused of plunder. He deserves to be in jail forever.

As for me, I cry each day that I am away from my family. I will miss the best years and times of my children's lives in order for me to make a better future for them. I cannot visit my family every other day for I do not have the hidden wealth that the Estrada clan has amassed. And to make things worse, I am not a crook. But somehow I feel that I myself am in a more miserable prison than JV's father. Did the INQUIRER have to print this interview just to make me feel miserable this Christmas? JV Ejercito does not deserve pity. The poor Filipino people do!—**ARMIN K. GAERLAN, Virginia, USA**

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readers advocate@inquirer.com.ph

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Holy Land conflict divides biblical Samaritans

FEATURE

Megan Goldin

NABLUS, West Bank—It's good to have a Samaritan come to your aid if you're trying to travel through the Holy Land in these troubled times.

Khader al-Samri, a member of the ancient community that traces its roots to the 10 lost tribes of Israel, sits in a cramped cubicle in the Palestinian Authority's headquarters in the West Bank city of Nablus trying to help local businessmen.

His blue eyes twinkle and a smile never leaves his face as he speaks into a telephone in rapid Hebrew to arrange permission with Israel for their passage through Israeli checkpoints.

Samri lives a tenuous existence wedged between his historic cousins in Israel and his neighbors, the Palestinians, under whose rule he lives in the northern West Bank.

On his way home from work, Samri shouts the words that almost magically open barriers that symbolize the wide divide between two peoples fighting over a biblical land.

"Samaritan, Samaritan," he bellows in Arabic as he drives through a Palestinian checkpoint on a road leading to his village on Mount Gerizim, the Samaritan holy mountain.

Moments later he shouts the same words, in Hebrew, to Israeli soldiers as he passes through their roadblocks.

"Everyone likes Samaritans," said Samri, one of only 650 Samaritans left in the world.

In the New Testament of the Bible, St Luke's gospel describes how a Samaritan was the only person to stop to help a traveler beaten by robbers. Hence, the term, "Good Samaritan."

Walking between the rain drops

The Samaritan community now finds itself smack in the middle of two warring peoples. Some of its members live in a secluded village next to Palestinian-ruled Nablus and others reside in Israel, in a neighborhood of the Tel Aviv suburb of Holon.

It means the Samaritans must steer a careful course while maintaining unity in a community split by more than geography.

"The Samaritans are caught between Israel and the Palestinians," said Benyamim Tsedakah, a Holon-based Samaritan who publishes the community's bi-monthly newspaper. "It's like walking between political rain drops and trying not to get wet."

Like most of the Samaritans of Nablus, Samri lives a chameleon-like existence. He holds an Israeli and a Palestinian Authority passport, votes in Israeli and Palestinian elections and speaks fluent Hebrew and Arabic.

His 5-year-old triplet sons—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—are equally proficient at navigating the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

"When they see an Israeli they say 'Shalom' and if they see a Palestinian they say 'Salam Alekum,'" said Samri, referring to interchangeable words for hello and peace in Hebrew and Arabic.

Caught in the crossfire

The feats performed by the Samaritans to avoid taking sides in the Middle East conflict—including attending funerals for top Israeli and Palestinian dignitaries—has become harder than ever since a Palestinian uprising against occupation began in September 2000 after peace talks froze.

"The Samaritans are not political," said Samri's uncle, Hosni Kohen, who, like his nephew, is from the priestly caste.

"We don't get involved in politics. It's not that we don't care or are apathetic, it's just that it is not good for the community," said Kohen, who runs the Samaritan museum which has been all but deserted by tourists since the uprising began.

But being neutral has not kept the Samaritans out of the line of fire since the uprising began more than 15 months ago.

Palestinian gunmen have mistaken the Samaritans—whose cars have yellow Israeli license plates—for Jewish settlers.

One Samaritan was recently wounded by gunmen as he drove home from his job in Israel and was then shot again by Israeli soldiers when the barely conscious and bleeding man's car slammed into a military checkpoint a few hundred meters away.

"At night it's hard. They don't know if I am Israeli or if I am Palestinian. I am afraid from both sides," said Samri.

Fighting extinction

Samaritans trace their roots to the northern Kingdom of Israel, Samaria in today's northern West Bank, which the Assyrians destroyed in 721 B.C.

The Samaritans' religious practices are similar to those of Judaism. They observe the Sabbath on Saturday and many Jewish festivals including Passover and the fast day of Yom Kippur, although their calendar is slightly different.

Like the Jews, the Samaritans circumcise their sons on the eighth day after birth. They observe dietary laws similar to those of the Jews, who are the descendants of the Israelites that inhabited the southern Kingdom of Judea, conquered by the Romans in A.D. 70.

The Samaritan population shrank to 146 people in 1917 after swelling to some 1.2 million in the fourth century when communities lived as far away as Cairo and Damascus.

Today there are 330 Samaritans living in Holon and 320 on Mount Gerizim.

One of the biggest threats to the Samaritans is biological. Some 60 percent of the community are male, making it difficult for them to replenish their numbers.

Dangers of modern world

Keeping the Samaritan religion and traditional neutrality alive has not been easy for the Samaritans of Nablus or Holon who must contend with an internal political and cultural divide that has become more pronounced since the Palestinian uprising began.

The Samaritans of Nablus speak Arabic among themselves and a form of ancient Hebrew on their Sabbath. Their daily life mirrors that of the Palestinian society in which they live.

Holon Samaritans speak fluent modern Hebrew and the ancient variety on Saturdays, when, like their brethren in Nablus, the community dons traditional white robes and red headdresses to attend services in Samaritan synagogues.

Unlike the West Bank Samaritans, those in Holon live in a modern Israeli city where they are exposed to the influences of Western culture—even on the Sabbath when the throb of trance music played by Israeli teenage neighbors disrupts prayers.

The Samaritans of Holon have been "Israelized." As Israeli citizens, the community's young men are drafted into the Israeli army. Children attend Israeli schools and speak little Arabic.

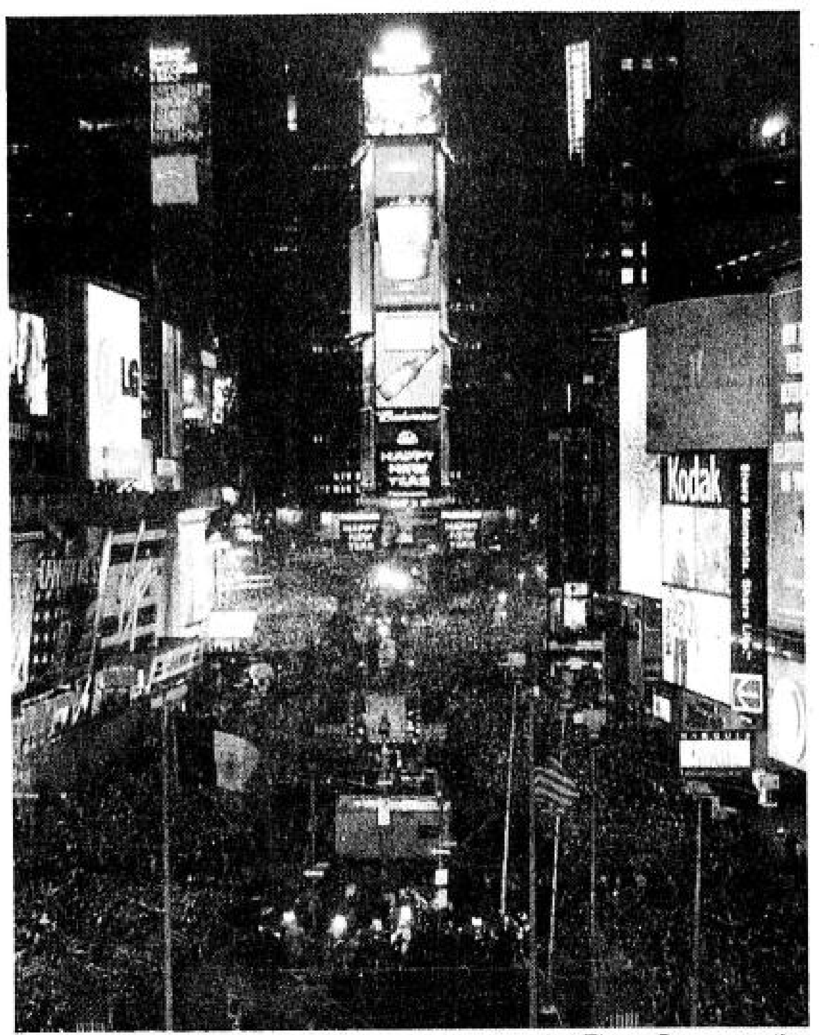
Despite a clear affiliation with Israel, the "Israeli" Samaritans remain apolitical, said Tsedakah whose newspaper is written in Arabic, Hebrew and the Samaritan's ancient script.

"We need to have good relations with both powers," he said. "The state of Israel takes care of my needs but it can't take care of the needs of my brothers on Mount Gerizim."

Tsedakah said the community is not worried about surviving for another millennium—it has overcome a dearth of Samaritan brides by allowing its bachelors to marry Jewish women, whose religion is not foreign to its own.

"The biggest problem for the Samaritans is politics," Tsedakah bemoaned.

Reuters



CONFETTI fly in the air above the crowd gathered at Times Square as the ball drops above One Times Square to signal the start of the New Year Jan. 1 in New York. AFP

NY rings in New Year, remembers Sept. 11

NEW YORK—Hundreds of thousands of people celebrated wildly in Times Square at midnight, hoping to banish the painful memories of the Sept. 11 attacks with a roaring, glittering, patriotic party to ring in the New Year.

The crowds, gathered under the tightest security in the 97-year history of New Year's Eve celebrations in New York, roared in deafening unison the count down to 2002 as a glittering crystal ball dropped slowly from the flagpole at One Times Square amid the blinking and cascading neon lights of "The Crossroads of the World."

'"This city is just tremendously strong," said Mike Alias, of Brooklyn. "The thought that there would be some sort of terrorism here almost made me want to come here more. There's a lot of defiance."

In a display of patriotism, thousands waved US flags and red, white and blue streamers. The crowds sang "God Bless America" and "America the Beautiful." At the stroke of midnight, confetti rained down over the square, flashbulbs popped from cameras recording the first moments of 2002, and the Frank Sinatra hit "New York, New York" blared from loudspeakers.

Many of the revelers, like Christina Noble of the borough of Queens, were relieved to see the end of 2001.

"I've never come here for New Year's before but I think this year is more important because of the horrible year we've had," Noble said. "Somehow, I think this will give us a little bit of closure."

The last four months of 2001 brought the September destruction of the 110-story twin towers of the World Trade Center, the US war in Afghanistan, an outbreak of the germ warfare agent anthrax in October and a plane crash in November that killed members of two close-knit New York communities.

No sooner had the old year passed and New York was looking to the future.

Two minutes after midnight in Times Square, departing Mayor Rudolph Giuliani—who oversaw the steepest drop in crime in 30 years and made the world's most diverse city safer and more governable—administered the oath of office to his successor, Michael Bloomberg.

Both men appeared emotional, their voices almost drowned out by the noise around them. Giuliani, who had been greeted with one of the biggest cheers of the night, held Bloomberg in a long embrace and the men shook hands after Bloomberg had finished taking the oath.

Billionaire Bloomberg, founder of the Bloomberg LP financial news and information company, took the first of three oaths of office Monday in a private, understated ceremony administered by the city clerk. Bloomberg, 59, will take part in a third at City Hall Tuesday and deliver his inaugural speech as leader of the city that needs to rebuild physically and psychologically from the hijacked plane attacks on lower Manhattan's financial district. *Reuters*

Argentina greets 2002 leaderless, penniless

BUENOS AIRES—Argentina is ringing in the New Year plunged in its worst crisis in decades after losing two presidents in as many weeks to popular unrest over a moribund economy and dirty politics.

Politicians huddled Monday to find a consensus candidate to replace Adolfo Rodriguez Saa, who resigned as president Sunday just one week after being named to lead the nation until elections set for March.

His predecessor Fernando de la Rua resigned Dec. 20.

But while politicians searched for a way out of the crisis, about 5,000 people took to the street in the capital's Floresta district to demand an investigation into the deaths of three youngsters gunned down by a commercial security guard during violent protests last Saturday.

Sen. Eduardo Duhalde, of the Peronist Party that holds a majority in Congress, was emerging as the top candidate for interim president Monday.

The former vice president and governor of Buenos Aires province also reportedly enjoyed the approval of other congressional parties, which agreed whoever takes over now should complete De la Rua's stunted term to December 2003.

Congress has been convened for a joint session at 2 p.m. Tuesday to formally accept Rodriguez Saa's resignation and appoint a new president.

However, there was no unity among key Argentina politicians about how long the interim president's mandate should be, or if scheduled March elections would take place.

Influential Peronist Buenos Aires province governor Carlos Ruckauf expressed the view that Duhalde, if elected, should remain in office until 2003.

Buenos Aires Mayor Anibal Ibarra, of the center-left party Frepaso, shared the same view, but added that "Argentina should not resist holding elections."

But Jose Manuel de la Sota, the centrist governor of Cordoba province, favored holding popular presidential elections in 35 to 40 days.

US President George W. Bush said he was "worried" about the Argentine crisis but said he was "confident the country will stay together" until a president is elected.

"And once they elect a president, we'll work with him," said Bush.

Meanwhile, Argentines, preparing for an uncertain new year, queued up once again at the banks, which extended their hours Monday at the request of Rodriguez Saa.

Banks were overwhelmed last week by depositors trying to extract what cash they could despite restrictions that limited withdrawals to $1,000 a month. *AFP*

India offers talks with Pakistan

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD—The new year brought signs of a thaw in the dangerous row between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan on Tuesday when New Delhi offered talks if Islamabad abandoned its "anti-India mentality."

In a new year message to the nation, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said he did not want war and would even consider talks on disputed Kashmir—at the heart of the latest tensions—but only when Pakistan ends cross-border terrorism.

"I extend my hand of alliance to them," he said in the message printed in major newspapers.

"I say to them: 'Shed your anti-India mentality and take effective steps to stop cross-border terrorism, and you will find India willing to walk more than half the distance to work closely with Pakistan to resolve, through dialogue, any issue, including the contentious issue of Jammu and Kashmir."

Indian officials said the opposing armies exchanged machinegun and mortar fire overnight across the ceasefire line in Kashmir in the Himalayas.

Troops are on alert elsewhere along the border, almost three weeks after a suicide attack on New Delhi's parliament sparked the biggest military buildup in 15 years by the two old enemies.

India blamed that attack on two of a dozen Pakistan-based Kashmiri separatist groups. New Delhi accuses Islamabad of sponsoring the Islamic separatists; Pakistan says it gives only moral support.

The rising tensions have stoked fears of a fourth India-Pakistan war and depressed financial markets. Both countries say they do not want another war but are being forced down that path by each other.

In addition to massing their forces along the border, New Delhi and Islamabad have scaled down diplomatic relations and halted air, rail and bus services across the border.

The first signs of a change in temperature came on Monday when India opened the door to top-level talks and welcomed Pakistani moves against the two Kashmiri separatist groups. *Reuters*

US may know location of Taliban chief Omar

KABUL/WASHINGTON—Afghan villagers accused the United States on Monday of mistakenly killing more than 100 civilians in an air raid, as US officials said they may have discovered the whereabouts of ousted Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar.

A senior Pentagon official said a "fairly consistent body of intelligence" suggested Mullah Omar may be hiding near Baghran, in Afghanistan's southern province of Helmand. The cleric was driven from his base in Kandahar last month as his government collapsed under the pressure of a relentless US air assault.

The United States would like to eliminate him as well as Saudi-born militant Osama bin Laden, who stands accused of masterminding the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington that killed almost 3,300 people.

CNN said US Marines in full combat gear appeared to be on the move in a mission to capture or kill Omar. But Rear Adm. Craig Quigley, a spokesperson for the Tampa, Florida-based Central Command, said: "There are no Marines going anywhere today from Kandahar or anywhere else."

In New York City, still mourning the victims who died in the World Trade Center, half a million revelers were expected to ring in the New Year in Times Square and Michael Bloomberg was sworn in as mayor, succeeding the outgoing Rudolph Giuliani. *Reuters*

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A GREEK policeman watches fireworks flashing by the "Euro Monument" project, a structure of 21,000 neon tubes, placed in Athens' central Syntagma square Jan. 1. Greece, along with Finland an hour ahead of central European time, welcomed the advent of euro notes and coins with music, song and dance across the country.
REUTERS

Enter the euro

PARIS—The euro currency became a reality for some 300 million Europeans in 12 nations on Tuesday, as New Year's Day rang in its first notes and coins and ushered out national currencies from the mark to the franc, the peseta to the lira.

As midnight struck across the 12-nation euro zone, New Year's revelers from Greece to Ireland made a frantic rush on cash dispensers, seeking pristine euro notes to toast a decisive step forward for European integration.

Authorities in participating countries laid on fireworks, music and lights to underline the historic nature of the biggest monetary switch in history, which has left many ordinary consumers fraught with anxiety over confusing shopping experiences, wonky cash dispensers and stubborn vending machines.

In Berlin, Germans said hello to the euro and goodbye to their beloved mark at a special ceremony at the Brandenburg Gate, as up to one million people thronged the streets for the traditional giant New Year's street party there.

In a special "euro-pavilion" erected by the Gate the president of the German central Bundesbank, Ernst Welteke, handed over a first euro note to Finance Minister Hans Eichel, amid a thunder of fireworks, signaling the moment from which ordinary Germans too could start using the new money.

In Paris getting euros took a little more time for some revelers.

As midnight struck, the first euro-hunters on Paris's Boulevard Montparnasse scrambled from bank to bank in a desperate search for the first dispenser to spew out the pristine notes, to find that many were still only gave out francs.

Finally their efforts to brave the cold and honking cars paid off and a cheer went up outside the Credit Lyonnais. The screen had changed. Soon a line of revelers was withdrawing bundles of shiny 20 euro bills, replete with images of unnamed bridge, map of Europe and anonymous Gothic architecture.

In Frankurt, the home of the powerful European Central Bank, executive board member Eugenio Domingo Solans said that no major hiccups had been reported in the few first hours of the new era of euro cash.

A special ECB committee set up to oversee the rollout of euro banknotes and coins had held a teleconference and "no meaningful incidents have happened so far," Solans told journalists at a special event held in the central bank's Frankfurt headquarters.

The ECB rang in the new era of the single currency in comparatively low key fashion, tens of thousands taking to the streets in Frankfurt to give the euro a deafening welcome of fireworks, lights and music. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Taiwan joins WTO

GENEVA—Taiwan formally joined the World Trade Organization on Tuesday, ending years of negotiations that were as often political as they were economic. The island becomes the 144th member of the body that sets rules on international trade, less than a month after its huge neighbor China joined. The Jan. 1 date was chosen by the Taiwanese deliberately to make implementation of new laws and regulations easier. To become a member of the body that sets rules on international trade, Taiwan had to agree to amend legislation, lower import tariffs in some areas and improve access to its markets for foreign companies. In return, Taiwanese companies hope for increased opportunities abroad and consumers hope for lower prices. Taiwan's membership was long held up because of an understanding reached in 1992 that China would join first. *AP*

5 blasts rock Indonesia

JAKARTA—Explosions rocked four churches in Indonesia's volatile Central Sulawesi province while a separate blast hit Jakarta on Tuesday killing one person, shattering what had been relative calm during recent religious festivals. Deputy national police spokesman Edward Aritonang said a grenade was either thrown at or exploded in the hands of a man standing outside a restaurant in Jakarta a couple of hours before dawn, killing him. Police in the Central Sulawesi capital of Palu in the country's east said four blasts outside churches in the city—three hit simultaneously as the New Year began—wounded at least one policeman. The province has witnessed savage clashes between Muslims and Christians in the past three years. *Reuters*

TRUTH WELL TOLD
Photo: John Chua
McCann Erickson is now in GT Tower

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Bright year seen for coco industry

By Joey Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau
and Ryan D. Rosauro
PDI Mindanao Bureau

PALO, Leyte—The coconut farmers in Eastern Visayas will have a bright New Year as the price of copra is going up.

Farmers in other coconut-producing regions are not as optimistic, however.

Edilberto Nierva, regional manager of the Philippine Coconut Authority, told the INQUIRER that for the past three weeks now, the price per kilo of copra stands at P8.70, more than double the previous prices that dipped to P3.50 or lower for nearly two years.

This bit of good news for the region's 350,000 coconut farmers are expected to be felt this year in the light of the recent decision of the Supreme Court declaring the P130-billion coconut levy fund as a public fund.

Nierva said the Macapagal-Arroyo administration is "expecting that within the next six months, the P130 billion coconut levy fund could be used by the farmers in terms of programs and projects."

Ms Macapagal has earlier directed Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor and Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho to study how to use best the P130-billion coconut levy fund.

Nierva said the PCA, anticipating the release of the money, has also drawn up a plan on how to use the huge amount.

"During our regional managers' meeting held in Davao City two weeks ago, we already (drew) up the so-called coconut industry master plan," he said.

Included in the coconut master plan are programs that will increase coconut production and processing, as well as social welfare programs like increased life insurance coverage and pre-need plan.

Once the fund is transferred to the government, Nierva predicted that a sizeable amount would be poured into Eastern Visayas because it is the country's third biggest coconut producing region.

The region has an annual coconut production of more than 650,000 metric tons, generating an income ranging from $15 to $17 million.

Aside from the expected inflow of cash to the industry brought about by the Supreme Court ruling, Nierva said the revitalization of the industry is also being helped by the poor quality of coconut oil coming from other countries which is now flooding the world market.

Support price

In northwestern Mindanao, coconut farmers are urging the government to establish a copra support price, as a relief measure for the troubled coconut industry.

The Makabayang Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas (Makabayan), however, said the price support should be a component only of a more comprehensive strategy toward resuscitating the coconut industry in the country.

Rowil Aguillon, Makabayan spokesperson, told the INQUIRER that based on their consultations, a viable support price would be P10 per kilo at the farm gate.

Aguillon explained that the P10-per-kilo copra support price would at least restore the farmers' purchasing power to the level before the copra price nose-dived about two years ago.

From a high of P16 per kilo, copra price slumped to a low of P5 in the region.

Aguillon said that because of the low price, farmers only get a very slim margin considering that the cost of producing copra is P3.50 to P4 per kilo.

He said the P10-support price would only restore that two-year-ago "economic state that was characterized by poverty, anyway."

"(But) admittedly, that condition is much better than today," Aguillon said.

Strategy

He urged the government to formulate a comprehensive strategy, which is beyond the resolution of the coco levy fund issue.

Aguillon also lamented that coconut farmers themselves are thinking about their claims against the coco levy fund than drawing up plans on how to improve the industry as a whole.

"(They think) not so much (about) the fate of the coco industry for which the fund was supposedly intended," he said.

Lawyer Paz Vicada-Quijano of the Alyansa sa mga Kabus (AK) said farmers need to continue producing coconuts before talking about money.

She noted that a number of farmers have already considered shifting into oil palm production.

"Aanhin pa ang damo kung patay na ang kabayo?" Vicada-Quijano said.

Aguillon said coconut farmers and the government should work together in drafting a strategy and a framework to revitalize the industry.

Some 60,000 families in Misamis Occidental are into coconut production.

More struggle

In Quezon province, most coconut farmers no longer make copra and just sell the coconut per piece or by kilo because of the continuous fall of coconut and copra prices.

Rene Cerilla, Ugnayan ng mga Magsasaka sa Quezon president, said "copra making is a laborious process and we still have to shell out some capital to hire farm workers."

He said the present price of a piece of coconut in the market is only P2.

Cerilla said his group will continue the struggle for the return of the coconut levy. ***With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Palaweños feast on blue moon

By Jofelle P. Tesorio
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Some residents of this city, mostly arts enthusiasts, watched the last full moon of the century last Dec. 30 with hopes that the year of the horse gets to kick the effect of the bad events that had besieged the province and the country.

The center for the arts here named Sentro ng Kusi @ Dipaga or Kultura at Sining Di Pangkaraniwang Gawain led a feast to celebrate the coming out of the blue moon.

Center director Bimbo Fernandez said this year's last full moon was very special.

It was the last full moon of the 21st century, the millennium and incidentally a blue moon, which only happens once or twice a year.

During this time, according to astrologers, the planet of Venus can be seen as the nearest non-twinkling planet to the moon. This, they say, only happens once in 83 years.

From the top of the mountain not far from the city's main district, the full moon almost kissed the roof of the Sentro ng Kusi @ Dipaga while the Palawano band performed its indigenous music coupled with dance performances of Puerto Princesa's cultural group.

The band started its repertoire with the famous song of Tropical Depression's "Pag Bilog Ang Buwan."

As the rhythm went from fast to ultra fast, the audience could not help drifting with the beat under the shining moon.

Then the music started to get sober with the famous song "Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang?" and "Fallin'" to create a romantic mood.

Before the program started, Fernandez led the offering of candles to the moon.

The candles were thrown to a bonfire to symbolize the participants' renewed faith that there is an Almighty Creator who made the moon, the stars, the water, and all the living things on earth.

"We should always believe that there is one Creator who is responsible for all these and we should all be thankful for another year of blessings from him," Fernandez said brimming with joy.

He added that celebration is also a prayer to the Almighty that no similar incident like the Abu Sayyaf kidnapping will happen again in Palawan and the rest of the country.

Kusi @ Dipaga has become a regular hub for artists and local residents who come here most of the nights to get some fresh air and every month during full moon.

Drinking is allowed by center administrators, especially during cold nights but on a moderate level so as not to spoil the wholeness of the celebration.

Lapid is GMA's emissary to Mindanao

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

LAPID

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Since May, it was the slum areas of Metro Manila. Last December, it was the conflict areas in Mindanao.

Helping build confidence for President Macapagal-Arroyo's anti-poverty program had taken Pampanga Gov. Manuel Lapid to such places.

And recently, Lapid was in Lantawan, Basilan, where he began on Dec. 18 his latest task as the President's special emissary to Mindanao.

In that town which he said was held by the Abu Sayyaf bandits nine years ago, the 45-year-old actor-turned-politician launched Ms Macapagal's "Kapit-Bisig Tungo sa Kaunlaran" program.

However, Lapid clarified that his new task does not include holding talks with the bandits to end their criminal activities.

"That's not my task because I'm not a soldier. We're here for the poor. I'm not participating in the war; that's too risky. And in the first place, the President did not issue an order of that sort," he told the INQUIRER on Friday.

He said though that he was "willing" to be sent to any part of the country to help in the President's efforts to curb poverty.

The President appointed the governor as her special emissary to urban poor communities immediately after supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada stormed Malacañang on May 1.

After the bloody siege, the President tapped popular movie personalities like Lapid to send her message to the masses, especially to Estrada's supporters. Specifically, Ms Macapagal wanted it made known that she was not their enemy but their friend.

Asked why he was given the new assignment, Lapid said with candor: "*Dahil artista ako* (Because I'm an actor)."

"*Nakita naman niya ang epekto sa* pro-Erap supporters. *Napatahimik, di ba? Napakahalaga ng* dialogues *sa mga mahihirap nating kababayan. Kailangang abutin sila para magkaunawaan tayo* (She saw its effect on the pro-Erap supporters. They were pacified, weren't they? Dialogues are important for our poor countrymen. We have to reach out to foster understanding)," he explained.

In Lantawan, Lapid said he and Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman slipped in quietly.

On board a C-130 cargo plane, they left Villamor Air Base in Pasay City for Zamboanga City, reaching the city by 7 a.m. They rode a helicopter to Basilan and traveled by land to Lantawan.

The Basilan visit was not announced to the media in Pampanga and Mindanao, Lapid said, adding he did not want fanfare in what he does in poor communities.

At the once abandoned municipal hall of Lantawan, Lapid said he led a consultation with the less than 1,000 residents who have returned to the former Abu Sayyaf lair.

Typical of his dialogues in action flicks, this, he said, was what he told them: "*Magkakalahi tayo. Hindi tayo dapat mag-away-away. Isang dugo lang tayo, Pilipino. Hindi bala't baril ang kailangan natin dito kundi lupa. Huwag nating diligan ng dugo ang lupa. Ang lupa, sabi ko, atin yan. Pagyamanin natin* (We belong to one race. We don't need to fight. We have one blood, Filipino. We don't need bullets and guns but land. Let us not spill blood on our land. The land, I told them, is ours. We have to make good use of it)."

He said the war-weary residents, mostly Tausugs, easily warmed up to him. He recalled having been called "idol."

Some men in the crowd gamely shouted, "Lito Lapid, *sa likod mo*!" referring to some movie scenes where the actor was warned by his friends to dodge the attacks of enemies.

During the consultation, which lasted for more than an hour, Lapid said the residents aired the urgent need for land and livelihood support like irrigation, seeds, fishing boats and roads.

"And they want peace. They want an end to the war," Lapid said. He also led a medical mission and relief operation in the town.

Lapid and Soliman also went to Isabela City, the capital of Basilan, where they met the residents there next to a house owned by Abu Sayyaf leader Khadafy Janjalani.

He admitted feeling a little nervous during the meeting but said he felt secure in the presence of officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu.

"I really saw poverty there, and heard the fear local people have of the Abu Sayyaf and of the war that is going on because of clashes between government soldiers and rebels," he said.

Overall, he said, he felt "comfortable" in his new role. "*Basta ba makakatulong, okey lang ako* (As long as my help is needed, I'm okay)," he said.

The results of these consultations, according to him, have reached Ms Macapagal who, in turn, had ordered the concerns and issues addressed through national agencies or local governments.

Lapid said he was helping the President because she is his *kabalen* (provincemate).

"*Ayaw din natin siyang masira. Hindi rin niya kayang gampanan lahat ng trabaho, lalo na yung para sa maliliit. At babae siya, di gaanong malakas katulad ng mga lalaki* (We don't want her destroyed. She cannot attend to all her tasks, especially those concerning the small people. And the President is a woman, who is not that physically strong compared to men)," he explained.

Low turnout for youth registration

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Commission on Elections has noted a low turnout in last week's registration of new voters in Negros Oriental for the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) set for May this year.

Provincial Election Supervisor Rogelio Benjamin said that based on earlier results that have started arriving at his office, the number of new voters for the SK election would only be around 80,000. This, he said, is a far cry from statistics that show that there are 250,000 people in Negros Oriental who are between the ages of 15 to 25.

The age of those who are eligible to vote in the SK elections is between 15 to 21.

Benjamin noted that many teenagers have failed to register because unlike the registration period for other elections which is done at the precinct level, the youngsters were required to go to the Comelec office in their locality.

There were also strong rains in other places which prevented the youth from registering, he said.

In contrast, Benjamin noted a high turnout of registrants for the barangay elections set on May 13, 2002.

He made this assessment based on results from the towns of Bindoy, Valencia, Tayasan, Amlan and Vallehermoso. The other results are expected to arrive from the other towns and cities today.

Benjamin said there are more registrants for the barangay elections because local politicians are involved in campaigning for more registrants.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

Anti-drugs drive to resume

DAVAO CITY—The anti-drugs campaign of Mayor Rodrigo Duterte will take center stage again this month as the city government noticed a slight increase in drugs supply lately.

Duterte made the announcement in his regular Sunday radio program Gikan sa Masa Para sa Masa.

From a drastic drop of 60 to 70 percent of supply at the height of summary killings by the Davao Death Squad (DDS), Duterte said illegal drugs are in again in the city.

The mayor cited university belts and downtown areas where pushers are again into the trade.

Two months after he took over the reigns of City Hall, Duterte waged an all-out war against the illegal drug trade. He vowed to cleanse the city of drug pushers.

But at the end of his November deadline, Duterte admitted he could not totally cleanse the city of drug pushers.

Police records showed a sharp decline in drugs supply and suspected drug pushers from the list of 500 persons, who can help the city against drugs, have gone to other areas.

In September, the dreaded vigilante group struck the city killing not only suspects on the illegal drugs but also cell phone snatchers, holdup men and thieves.

Duterte is thinking of putting up a drug rehabilitation center, instead of going to court.

Duterte said he might take a portion of a loan, which the city would avail, for the construction of the center. *Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DUE TO ANOMALY

ARMM education exec steps down

COTABATO CITY—After unearthing what she described as "immoral and illegal" financial transactions made by her predecessor, Bai Sandra Sema, education secretary of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, announced she was stepping down.

"I cannot allow myself to be an unwitting spectator to all these irregular deals, I do not want to be used as a convenient smokescreen and end up being blamed for the crimes of others," Sema said in a statement.

Mrs. Sema is the wife of Cotabato City Mayor Muslimin Sema.

She was Nur Misuari's education secretary in 1996 but was sacked when ranking leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front sacked Misuari as chairman.

The MNLF leaders, later known as the Council of 15, include her husband.

Misuari named Abdulrajur Alpa as Mrs. Sema's replacement, but she was recently re-appointed to the post by acting ARMM Gov. Alvares Isnaji.

Upon assumption, Mrs. Sema said she started to dig into the department's financial transactions under Alpa and found out that funds for public school teachers amounting to P150 million were withdrawn by DECS-ARMM officials.

She said one of those responsible for the withdrawal of funds was Alpa and cashier Akmad Mohammad.

Mrs. Sema said her decision to step down was mainly to protect her "name from the machinations being employed by persons with vested interests in DECS-ARMM."

"It is for these reasons that I ask for your indulgence for my decision of resigning," she said. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

'Hinugyaw' set in Koronadal

THE CITY of Koronadal welcomes the new year with a bang when it celebrates the Hinugyaw Festival from Jan. 3 to 10.

"Hinugyaw," a Hiligaynon term for merry-making, is set to regale local and foreign tourists as fun and exciting events unfold in front of their eyes. Among them are the performances on Jan 3 and 4 of "Hoodo-Bu," a play featuring the scenes from the last days of Gen. Paulino Santos, founder of the Koronadal settlement.

Kolon Data, another stage play about the history of Koronadal will portray the city's local colors participated in by city employees and officials of Koronadal.

The highlight of the festival is the Hunigyaw street dancing featuring a cultural parade dubbed as "The Festival of Festivals."

From a rustic, rolling fields of grass (its name comes from the Maguindanao words "koron" or "kolon" which is cogon grass and "nadal" or plain), Koronadal is now a bustling city of promise in South Cotabato.

Formerly known a Marbel (from the B'laan word for murky water), the city of Koronadal has 27 barangays and a population of 120,000 where the natives coexist peacefully with the Ilonggos, Cebuanos, Ilocanos, Badjaos, Tagalogs and Muslims.

Traders hail expansion of Maguindanao airport

COTABATO CITY—Traders in Southern Mindanao region welcomed the news that government will convert the Awang airport in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao, into a world-class international airport.

"It's long over due and we are very happy the present government will start implementing it in 2002," Tony Santos, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry vice president for Mindanao, said.

Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez said the expansion and conversion of Awang airport will be undertaken under the airport development program of the Macapagal administration.

"The government believes it is necessary to upgrade the status of Awang airport and make it a major transport facility," Alvarez said in a statement.

"It's a very good development because the airport is one of the major infrastructure needed if we want our area to be placed in the investment map of the country," Santos told the INQUIRER.

"The news is an added boost to our desire to invite more foreign traders," he added.

During this year's Mindanao Business Conference, foreign and domestic traders who forged joint ventures with local businessmen were checking on the airport and seaport facilities of the region.

"How could we implement development in business when our airport could not accommodate international planes?" Santos said, adding that he is hoping the Macapagal administration will also look into the development of the Polloc Port, South-Central Mindanao's main port.

Alvarez said the airport complex will be overhauled the moment the Army's 6th Infantry Division vacates portion of its camp beside the present runway.

The airport could accommodate only B-737 and C-130 planes. The runway could not be used at night because of the lack of lighting facilities.

Under the program, the expanded airport will take about 20 percent of the 6th ID camp.

"The 6th ID also welcomes this development," Maj. Juliero Ando, spokesperson of the Army division, said adding that a bigger portion of the camp is still vacant.

Citing its strategic location, Alvarez said the Awang airport is an ideal location for an international airport in South-Central Mindanao.

The present buildings and structures of the Awang airport will be torn down beginning this month to give way for new structures, Alvarez said.

The first phase of the project will be completed by March 2002.

The reclassification includes widening and extension of the runway for it to be able to accommodate bigger planes. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

SOUTHERN LUZON

Heightened insurgency amid peace talks

YEAR-ENDER

MILITARY officials in Southern Luzon said insurgency is still the number one peace and order problem the area.

The communist insurgents operate in Southern Luzon continue to rise in number.

They placed the total rebel strength in the area in 2001 at 3,189 members. At least 1,715 of them were armed with 1,237 assorted high-powered firearms and 478 low-caliber weapons.

But the Southern Luzon Command officials stressed that the military is still in full control of the situation in the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions.

The arena has now shifted from Quezon and Laguna to the island-provinces of Oriental and Occidental Mindoro.

For the first time, the communist rebels restrained themselves from staging offensive military operations against government forces during the NPA founding anniversary celebration on Dec. 26, in observance of the communist-declared unilateral Christmas ceasefire.

The military also revealed that the NPA collects at least P28 million a year from "revolutionary taxation" activities in the Calabarzon area alone.

As a result of increased revolutionary tax collections, military officials in the Bicol region have classified the NPA as a syndicated crime group as "they are more preoccupied with their extortion activities rather than facing government forces."

With the continuous rise of insurgency, charges of military human rights abuses from leftist activists also reverberated, especially in Southern Tagalog.

The communist insurgents owned the killings of the late Quezon Rep. Marcial Punzalan Jr. and Tanauan Mayor Cesar Platon several days before the May elections.

Illegal drug smuggling

The past year brought into limelight the extensive and daring operation in the Southern Tagalog Region of international drug syndicates mainly in the production and distribution of high-grade methamphetamine hydrochoride, more popularly known as shabu.

On April 29, a team of police operatives raided a suspected shabu laboratory in Barangay Sto. Niño, Lipa City.

The raid reportedly yielded 1,000 kg of high-grade shabu worth P2 billion, which the police described as the biggest drug haul in the country in 2001.

On Oct. 13, the police arrested Panukulan mayor Ronnie Mitra for his involvement in the drug trade. He was driving an ambulance that yielded 498 kilos of shabu worth about P1 billion.

Masbate Vice Gov. Mario Espinosa said the illegal drug problem had grown so rapidly that he feared drug money might be used by some politicians to win in the May 14 elections.

Bleakest in Palawan

The year 2001 was the bleakest yet challenging year for Palawan.

The once safest and most peaceful province in the Philippines woke up on May 27 with a news that the Abu Sayyaf took hostage 20 of the guests and staff of Dos Palmas resort in Honda Bay.

Seven months after, the province still suffers from the effect of that incident. Tourism, the second largest industry in the province, got most of it.

This also led to the closure of some establishments, including the once-thriving Dos Palmas.

But local governments and the Palawan and Puerto Princesa City tourism councils never showed any signs of retreat nor surrender. The incident has sparked them to move a hundred times better and smarter to promote Palawan.

Last year also marked a tension-filled election in the province. The race for the gubernatorial post was tight between incumbent Reyes and former Puerto Princesa mayor Edward Hagedorn.

The former mayor became more popular after being seen with deposed President Joseph Estrada until his last minute in Malacanang.

The May elections were memorable and painful to Reyes.

Although the counting of ballots showed signs that he was leading the race, a tragedy struck the province. The helicopter ferrying his mother, Lualhati, from a town fell in the mountains.

Another tragedy happened when the rescue helicopter from the 570th composite tactical wing fell while carrying dead bodies in the first crash. Both accidents are still being investigated until now.

Last year was also the year when local and national politicians squabbled over the supposed share from the Camago-Malampaya Natural Gas-to-Power Project.

Even when President Macapagal-Arroyo promised to give Palawan its just share during her last visit in June, some cabinet members argued that Palawan has no right over the share because Malampaya does not belong to the 15-kilometer municipal water as mandated in the Local Government Code.

Promising industry

Non-government groups were also agitated with the newest threat facing Palawan's environment with the approval of the controversial nickel refinery complex in Bataraza town.

The trade and industry sector in the Southern Tagalog Region shows promising indications.

The Department of Trade and Industry said investment opportunities are encouraging as shown by the increased number of investments being generated even at the municipal level.

DTI statistics showed that as of November, 133,754 business permits issued were issued to groups or individuals.

Last year, only 125,986 permits were issued in the 11 provinces of the region.

The Department of Labor and Employment Region IV office, however, had a discouraging report.

Dole Region IV records showed a significant total number of retrenchments, both temporary and permanent, in factories and establishments as of Oct. 31.

The records showed that 18,783 workers were retrenched throughout the region as of that date.

Of this, about one-half or 9,042 employees were separated permanently.

Clarin's report also showed that of the 227 firms, 32 had already permanently closed while 46 firms are still temporarily non-operational.

The National Statistical Coordination Board-Region 4 said that in July, it had calculated the employment rate in the whole region at 88.7 percent.

Mayon eruption

The Mayon Volcano exploded on June 24, hurling superheated, chocolate-colored and cauliflower-shaped ash columns about five kilometers high.

Immediately, authorities evacuated 11,156 persons from Barangays Mabinit, Bonga, Matanag, Buyuan and Padang in Legazpi City.

Although it brought destruction and untold miseries to victims, the June 24 explosion, as in the previous Mayon eruptions, brought out the best in the Bicolanos—from the lowly farmer to the highest official—in terms of cooperation, sacrifice, perseverance, determination and hard work.

When President Macapagal-Arroyo visited Bicol on Dec. 15 last year, she mused about the slow economic development in the region which made it second to the poorest Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in the country even as the cities of Naga and Legazpi were experiencing growths.

Ms Macapagal observed that despite some developments in the "Legazpi-Iriga-Naga-Daet growth corridors," the urban centers assigned with increased development that would trigger trickle-down effect to other localities, the rest of the Bicol towns remained poor.

She recommended a comprehensive tourism plan that would not be dependent on the periodic eruption of Mayon Volcano and advocated "economic holiday" to spur economic growth in Bicol.

Hope

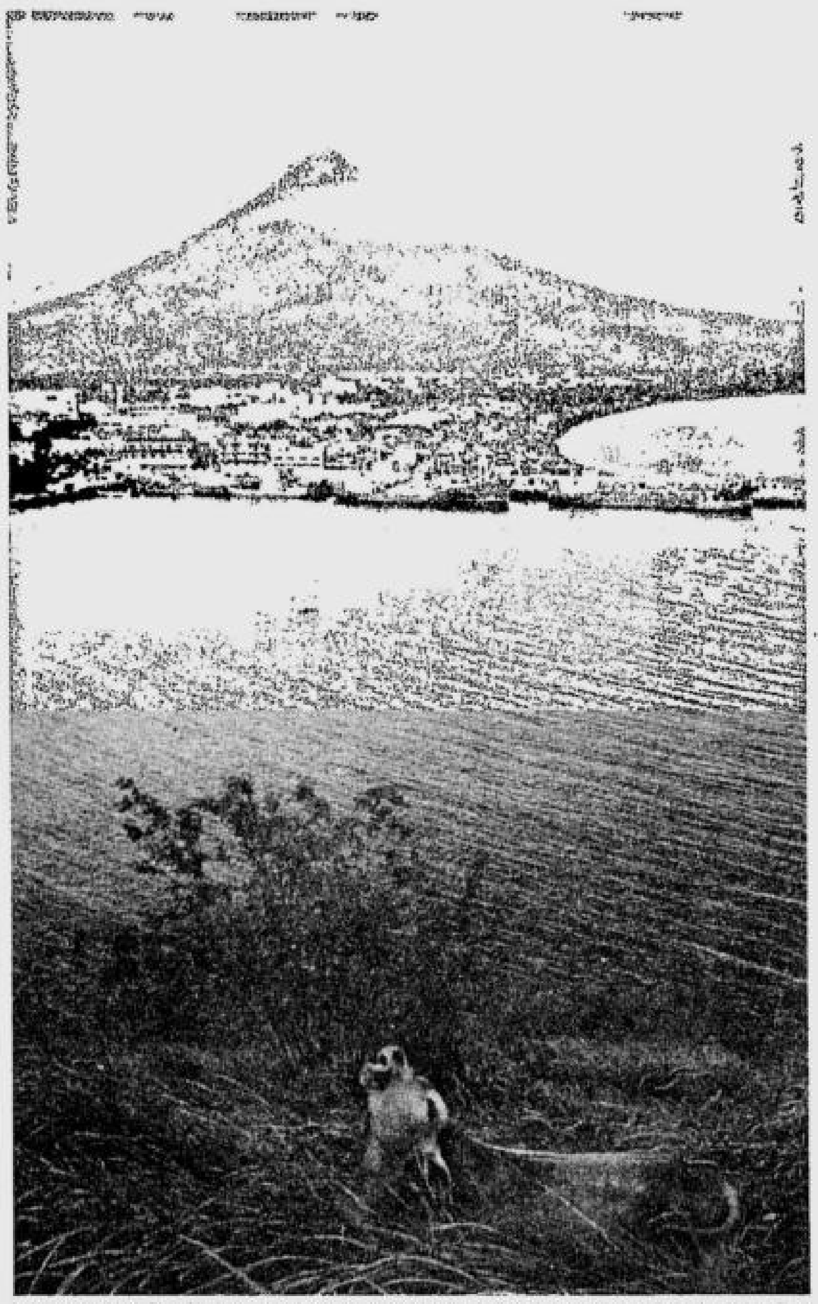
But a light at the end of the tunnel has emerged with the increasing demand for abaca in the world market, the Fiber Industry Development Authority said.

The Bicol regional economy has been beefed up with the production of abaca pulp that constitutes the bulk of the export earnings for the past five years while the erratic price of copra in the world market continues to dive.

In addition, in the third quarter of 2001, the Department of Agriculture has announced a better performance in rice production and assured of a 100-percent rice sufficiency for the rest of the months last year.

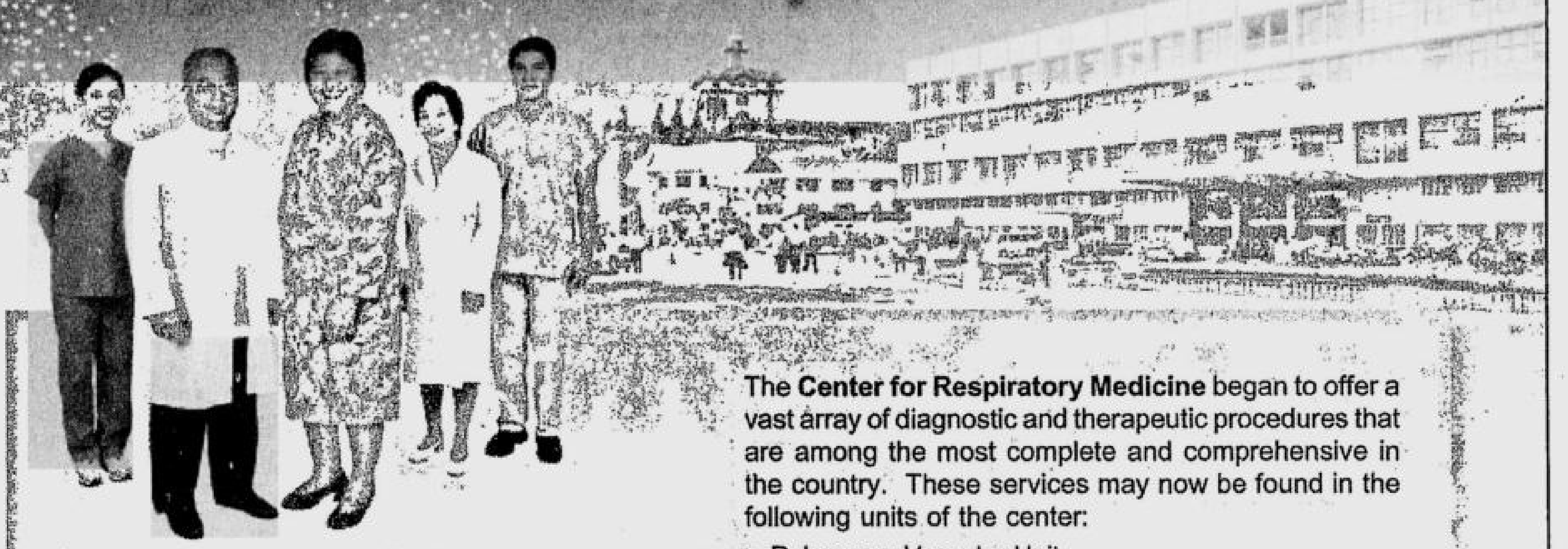
But the continuous inflow of cheap imported rice has set back the farmgate prices of palay to as low as P5.25 a kilo during harvest season.

The restiveness of the farmers on the deteriorating situation in the rice industry was further fueled by several reported incidents of rice smuggling. *Floreno G. Solmirano, Juan Escandor Jr., Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Romulo P. Ponte and Jofelle P. Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



THE MAJESTIC Mt. Mayon that erupted in June brought destruction to at least 12,000 persons living around it. FILEPHOTO

As we enter the new year, USTH renews its commitment to pursue quality health care for all its patients



As we enter the new year, the University of Santo Tomas Hospital (USTH) renews its commitment to pursue quality health care for all its patients.

The year 2001 was an exciting year for us at USTH. Under the new management team, composed of professional men and women acknowledged to be comparable to the best in their fields, dramatic changes have taken place.

Operations were streamlined, equipment and facilities were upgraded and red tape was cut down. Of the numerous enhancements that have taken place at USTH, we take pride in the following achievements!

A **Cardiac Catherization and Intervention Unit** was inaugurated, equipped with state-of-the-art imaging system where all lines of heart procedure could be performed.

The **Center for Kidney Diseases** was upgraded with 22 dialysis machines capable of performing 350 – 400 dialysis procedures a week.

A **Nutrition Center** was put up to serve as a hub for coordinating and standardizing the practice of quality nutrition for hospitalized patients.

The **Center for Respiratory Medicine** began to offer a vast array of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures that are among the most complete and comprehensive in the country. These services may now be found in the following units of the center:

- Pulmonary Vascular Unit
- Interventional Pulmonology Unit
- Pulmonary Rehabilitation Unit
- Sleep and Snore Diagnostic and Treatment Unit
- Diagnostics Unit

A **Delivery Room and Newborn Unit Package** was launched to provide more affordable and reasonable rates for clinical division patients.

The Eye Center was conceptualized to be the premier eye center in the Philippines where patients get total eye care in the hands of the best-qualified eye specialists utilizing state-of-the-art facilities.

Our accomplishments in the last year would not have been possible without the legacy and solid foundation of the UST Hospital. The Hospital remains steadfast in promoting excellence and professionalism among its ranks. The training programs shall continue to propagate the Thomasian brand of education-clinical acumen, a compassionate heart and adherence to ethical standards.

So, as we enter 2002, USTH renews its commitment to promote the Thomasian mission of pursuing quality health care for all its patients. Of excellent and caring service to the sick, particularly the marginalized.

A Happy New Year to All!

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS HOSPITAL
España, Manila
For inquiries about USTH's services please call 731-0314 / 781-3901 or 749-9787.

INQUIRER Northern Luzon
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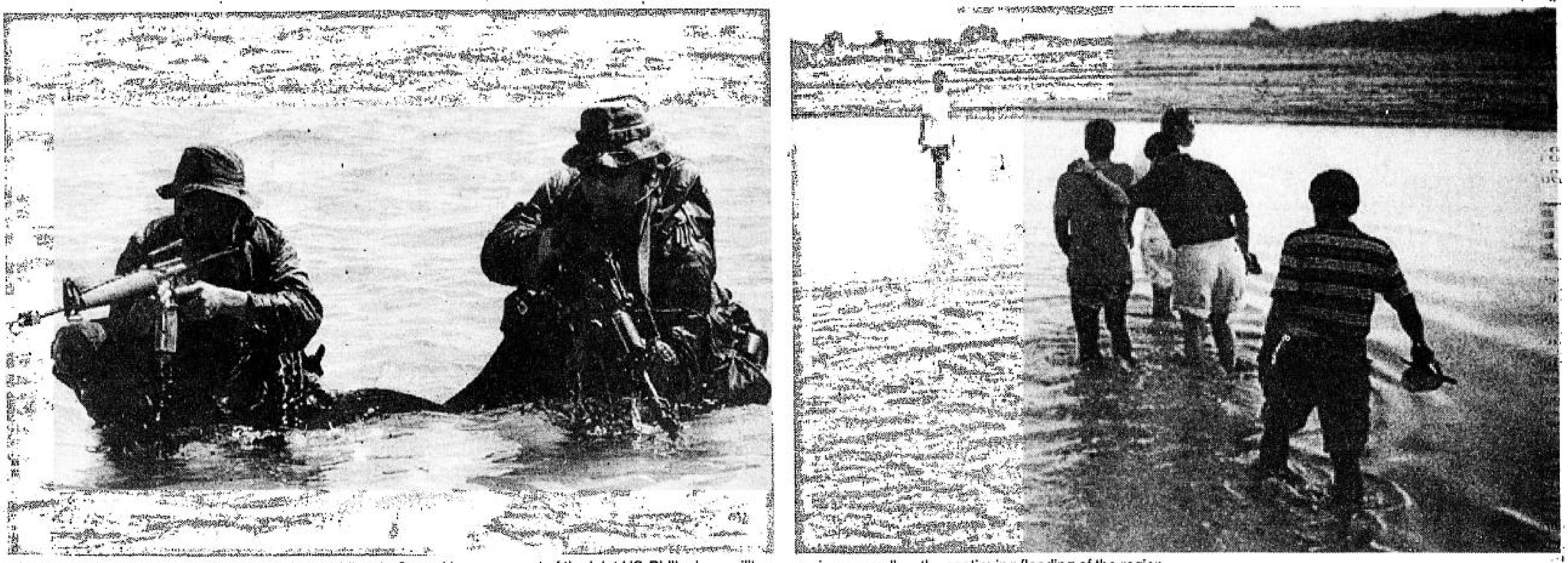

THE YEAR saw the coming back of American soldiers in Central Luzon as part of the joint US-Philippines military exercises as well as the continuing flooding of the region. FILE PHOTOS

A turbulent year in Central Luzon

By the PDI Central Luzon Desk

CENTRAL Luzon experienced a more turbulent year in 2001. Politically divisive events, the region's increasing role in the economic liberalization program of the government, renewed military significance of former bases in the anti-terrorism drive of the United States and its allies, and an escalating insurgency were the developments that divided the region's residents and tested their resilience.

YEAR-ENDER

The year began with street protests, many reaching as far as the Edsa Shrine, to ensure the unconventional rise of Kapampangan Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to the presidency and the ouster of President Joseph Estrada from office.

However, the loyalties of politicians in Central Luzon did not change swiftly for the new president. In the May 2001 elections, only voters in the Kapampangan provinces of Pampanga and Tarlac overwhelmingly voted for Ms Macapagal's 13 senatorial candidates.

Politics

The May 2001 local elections were overly crowded, with 4,048 candidates vying for 1,554 local positions. Party switching, coalescing and the accommodation of Estrada politicians characterized the local race. While largely peaceful, the local elections were not for the most honest.

Protests greeted the political ambitions of the President's eldest son, Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo. On the so-called "Gloria magic" and at the prodding of politicians wanting to have a direct access to Malacañang, Mikey won as Pampanga vice governor.

Pampanga Gov. Manuel Lapid went beyond the confines of Pampanga, serving as special emissary to urban poor communities and, of late, in Mindanao for the President's anti-poverty program.

Having a common ally in the person of Ms Macapagal was not enough for Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon and Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo to patch things up.

Their feud simmered, heightened by at least 18 graft cases filed by Payumo and dealt with equal intensity by Gordon's supporters whose sentiments include being left out in the base conversion process they helped begin.

Clark, Subic

Confidence in the Macapagal administration helped the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga and Tarlac and the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in Bataan and Zambales perform remarkably.

In Clark, 49 investment projects with a combined total committed investments of P101.97 billion have located from January to October, making the former US airbase one of the top investment sites in the country today, the Presidential Commission for the Central Luzon Growth Corridor (PC-CLGC) said.

Two pro-airport groups brought to the courts their case against Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez and the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco), whose contract's exclusive provisions for the Naia's third passenger terminal were blamed for the slow development of the Clark airport.

Congress, however, found Piatco's contract to be in order.

Subic, on the other hand, maintained its reputation of being the top revenue earner among economic zones in the country. Until September, it contributed P2.6 billion to the national treasury and generated 15,270 new jobs, the commission said.

Clark and Subic suffered the biggest labor woes as unrest gripped the zones. Yohokama, one of Clark's biggest investors, reported losing P120 million on the heels of a two-month strike by workers.

Of almost 15,000 workers who lost their jobs in 2001, more than half came from companies that closed shop in Clark and Subic.

In Nueva Ecija, the Casecnan multipurpose irrigation and power project which was designed to augment irrigation water to the failing Pantabangan Dam, was inaugurated on Oct. 12.

The Visiting Forces Agreement in 1999 allowed the return of American troops in Clark, Subic and other parts of the country solely for joint military exercises.

However, the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States renewed even more the military significance of Clark and Subic, as well as the former Mactan Air Base in Cebu City, in the international counter-terrorist drive which the Macapagal administration strongly supported.

By November, 110 US Marines and 12 aircraft twice made Clark a transit point for the US-led "Operation Enduring Freedom." The year also saw top US military officials coming to the country.

The military reuse of Clark and Subic worried toxic waste victims and local businessmen.

By October, the terror scare spread in Central Luzon, with at least four suspected antrax-laden letters turned over to the Department of Health. All tested negative for the deadly virus.

Insurgency

The New People's Army of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan of the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines grew in terms of membership, arms and strongholds, Army and police reports showed.

For the year, the Army reported killing 47 NPA rebels, capturing 1,908 others and forcing the surrender of 226 more.

In November, police authorities tagged the NPA as behind the series of arson attacks on the transmission installations of three big telecommunications companies in five Luzon provinces. These were in retaliation for the reported refusal of the companies to pay P8 million in monthly revolutionary taxes.

Jueteng, crimes

The illegal numbers game that, among other things, caused the downfall of Estrada continued to be rampant in Central Luzon, based on the number of raids reported by Camp Olivas.

Suspected big-time jueteng financier Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda surprisingly withdrew from the lucrative trade. Some sources claimed he conceded to do so to be free from being dragged in cases against Estrada.

In Pampanga, the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation made a futile search for Edgar Bentain, the Casino Filipino employee who went missing after purportedly releasing a video tape showing Estrada playing baccarat.

Heroism

In Nueva Ecija and Bulacan, the summary executions of men believed linked to illegal drug trade became more often than usual.

Salvaging by a suspected vigilante group in Nueva Ecija that claimed at least 33 victims during the year topped the news events in the province. The City of Gapan, tagged earlier by the police as the drug center of the province, had the most number of victims with 22.

Amid the gloom of the year, two stories of heroism stood out.

One was by Air Force First Lt. Mary Grace Baloyo in March. Refusing orders to eject and steering her distressed OV-10 reconnaissance and bomber plane away from populated areas in Mabalacat, Pampanga, the Bacolod lass saved some 200 families from death.

Baloyo became a heroine in the town after her plane crashed. The road where she bravely met her death was named after her.

In June, two Aetas—Patricio Gutierrez and his brother-in-law Rafael Pan—displayed friendship. Together, they led US Lt. JG Scott Allan Washburn to Clark after he went missing for 33 hours in Mt. Pinatubo.

His group of nine American and Filipino soldiers was attacked by a group of NPA rebels outside Clark.

Disasters, health

Mt. Pinatubo continued to pose a threat. In September, its crater-lake's lowest rim was breached, necessitating the evacuation of 40,000 residents in Botolan, Zambales.

Typhoons "Feria" and "Jolina," although mildly battering the region, flooded Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac and Pampanga and affected nearly 300,000 residents.

The biggest number of persons afflicted with dengue in the last 10 years in Nueva Ecija was recorded in 2001. The victims numbered 1,430 with six fatalities. ***With reports from Tonette Orejas and Anselmo Roque***

Rizal cult unfazed by photo controversy

By Tonette Orejas
Arayat, Pampanga

THE CONTROVERSY surrounding the authenticity of a photograph on the execution of Dr. Jose Rizal did not disrupt the observance of the 105th anniversary of his martyrdom by a cult in Arayat, Pampanga, that regards the national hero as a god.

An eight-by-five-inch reproduction—the only known picture of Rizal's death by a firing squad at the Bagumbayan (now Luneta)—was not stripped from the wall of the Señor Ignacio Coronado Jose Protacio Rizal Mahal na Ina Birheng Sinukwan Universal Shrine at the foothills of Mt. Arayat on Dec. 30.

On the same day, history professor Pio Andrade Jr., in an article published by the INQUIRER, raised questions on the authenticity of the photograph. He said it might probably be a still from a 1912 American movie on the hero's life.

Andrade mainly cited the conflicting recollections of Rizal historian Prof. Austin Craig and Swiss citizen Werner Weinmann, brother-in-law of Filipino patriot Jose Alejandrino, a Kapampangan who witnessed the event.

Andrade noted the differences in the physical features of the park as captured in the photograph and as Weinmann documented it in a sketch he made.

To date, it is the only picture that Rizalistas know of and owned on the execution of Rizal, their Amang Infinito (Infinite Father), according to Esting Malang, the cult's leader.

On Sunday, more than 500 Rizalistas from Pangasinan and La Union in Northern Luzon; Pampanga, Nueva Ecija and Bulacan in Central Luzon; Laguna, Quezon and Aurora in Southern Tagalog; as well as from the Bicol provinces gathered to revere Rizal in austere, contemplative ceremonies.

Veneration rites

Part of the veneration rites, which started on the night of Dec. 28, included viewing several photographs of the hero and his supposed woman incarnate, the Mahal na Inang Birheng Sinukwan or Apo.

Thrice last Sunday, young and old followers, many dressed in long and white robes, assembled before a huge portrait of Rizal placed at the center of the 1,000-sq. m. garden secluded by a high bamboo fence and adorned with many Philippine flags.

Under an old tamarind tree, Rizalistas stood erect, their right hand on their chest, reciting common prayers and chanting solemn hymns accompanied by a lyre and a guitar.

THE RIZALISTAS assemble for a collective prayer and singing honoring Rizal whom they consider god. TONETTE OREJAS

The prayers and songs, such as the "Sa Lansangan ng Hari," were replete with messages of patriotism, which Rizal left through his two major novels, the "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo."

During the morning program, they recalled the trials of Rizal, his writing of the Mi Ultimo Adios (My Last Farewell) and his execution at Bagumbayan on Dec. 30, 1896.

These recollections ended with the singing of Indios Bravos in Spanish by Tirso Escalante, one of the old Rizalistas.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner were banquets of fish, meat, rice and fruits.

In their cubicles at the mountain sanctuary at Barangay San Juan Baño here, Rizalistas also read the Filipino translations of these novels, which were banned during the Spanish era. The National Historical Institute donated these novels as well as other reproduction of manuscripts by and on Rizal.

"We would like the issue (fake or genuine photograph) to be settled but it is not our major concern. What matters to us are his teachings," Malang told the INQUIRER.

Uniting the Rizalistas, preserving the cult's beliefs and shielding it from the incursions of religious influences have also been a tremendous task, according to Malang.

Last year, though, was "good" because the Rizalistas had "grown more in solidarity," Malang said, without elaborating on the causes of differences within the 51-year-old cult.

"Differences are inherent in nature. Like trees, there are those that grow straight, twisted or are bent," he explained.

Female medium

This year's observance of Rizal's death anniversary was also "significant" because it coincided with the 10th death anniversary of Mahal na Inang Sinukwan. No one knew her true name but Rizalistas simply call her "Apo."

Rizal, according to these Rizalistas' belief, first transfigured himself as Magtanggol Coronado, the "Binatang Rizal" who taught Rizal's teachings in Licheria in Calamba, Laguna. It was said that the "Binatang Rizal" wooed Apo whom he met in Tondo.

In 1947, Malang said Magtanggol Coronado passed onto Apo the crown of 48 stars, symbolizing complete perfection, as a signal to begin her *misteryo* (mystery).

She came to Pampanga that same year, first roaming the province as a woman in dirty clothes and with hair full of lice. In 1950, garbed in white, she established the sanctuary in Arayat.

Apo died on Dec. 7, 1991 or a year after warning of a great eruption, referring to Mt. Pinatubo's violent awakening in June that same year. Apo was 91 years old when she "left." The term "dying" is not used to refer to either the demise of Rizal or of his woman incarnate, Malang said.

He explained that Rizal's writings referred to a Great Mother who shall lead the people to the right path. In Chapter 14 of Rizal's "Noli Me Tangere," Malang said the "Dalubhasang Guro *na magtuturo sa amin* (the Great Teacher who shall teach us)" was one who was "*mag-aanyong isang mahinang binibini* (to take the form of a weak lady)."

This "Great Teacher," the Rizalistas believed, was the Mahal na Ina Birheng Sinukwan.

Malang said Apo chose to popularize Rizal's teachings in Mt. Arayat, whose old name was Sinukwan (to whom everyone surrenders). Rizal's writings said people would surrender to the Great Mother.

These teachings, according to Malang, are similar to the Catholic's 10 Commandments. High on Rizal's teachings, however, is the love for country and countrymen, humility and honesty.

This year, Rizalistas plan to retrieve the remains of Apo, which are buried in a cemetery somewhere in Metro Manila. They plan to cremate the remains and keep the ashes in an urn that will be placed in the sanctuary.

Ifugao carver builds own city

By Frank Cimatu
Baguio City

EVERYBODY wants to create a city. That is why computer games like Civilization and Sim City became among of the biggest gaming softwares ever because they give a commoner the power to create his or her own cities complete with plumbing, highways and fortresses.

Reynaldo Lopez Nauyac dug up his own city and named it the "Ifugao Global Forest City."

Why global forest?

"Because everything I do here will affect the whole environment," Nauyac said. "And because I want a city of trees."

In his own simple way, Nauyac, known more as the first woodcarver and 20-year barangay captain of Asin village in Baguio City, has slowly reforested the mountains of his hometown in Ifugao.

He had almost single-handedly planted more than 100,000 indigenous hardwood, semi-hardwood and fruit trees in his native Hapao in Hungduan, Ifugao, for the past 10 years and is planning to plant 20,000 trees yearly.

Because Hapao is also the watershed for the famed Ifugao rice terraces, Nauyac is paving not only the return of woodcarving in his province but also the revival of indigenous rice farming.

Forget about virtual cities, this is the real thing.

Like other visionaries, Nauyac's dream came in the so-called *satori* or instant insight. While carving wood in Asin, he noticed that the wood types he was using are getting crumbly and brittle unlike the hardwood he remembered hewing in the 1950s. He also noticed idle woodcarvers drinking themselves to stupor because there were fewer wood to carve.

Hardwood of his youth

Nauyac decided to plant trees—not your hybrid gmelina but the hardwood of his youth.

He recalled finding a *bangtinon* tree or rosewood, a very aromatic semi-hardwood tree used for cabinets and panels, in Asin in 1979. For three years, he tried getting seeds from the *bangtinon* tree. On the fourth year, he found out that his fellow woodcarvers had cut down the *bangtinon*.

With his seeds, he went to Hapao and formed a nursery and experimented on the *bangtinon* to make it hardier. He renamed the hybrid *bangtinon* as "Nauyac" in honor of his father, a maker of Ifugao huts who single-handedly raised Nauyac in Hapao.

Reynaldo Nauyac's mother and siblings were all killed in the bombing run intended for Japanese Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita during the last days of World War II in the Cordillera.

Through the years, Nauyac has also brought back to life other indigenous hardwood trees like the *akleng parang* (*Albizia procera*), which he renamed the *wigan* (after the first man in Cordillera myth), and the *poley* or *bugbugan*.

He has planted these trees back in the mountains of Hapao Central, Baang and Nungulunan in Hungduan.

It was only in 1997 when Nauyac decided to form the Ifugao Global Forest City Movement (IGFCM). He trained some of the idle woodcarvers in Hapao to become foresters.

IGFCM now has four nurseries in Nungulunan, Baanag, Hapao Central and Hungduan Central. The IFGCM has also built three kilometers of irrigation canal for the nurseries' use.

Ifugaos had their own way of managing forest called the *pinugo* or *muyong*. But these forests are usually private ones owned by the clans. Public or community forests are usually not forested because villagers believe they will only sow conflict once they start cutting even the trees that they had planted.

But Nauyac does not care who harvest the trees he planted.

"It is for the world that I planted these. Maybe the woodcarvers will come back to Hapao or maybe they will not. All I can think of is I have did my part," he said.

Last May, Nauyac transferred his father's bones to a new tomb in Hapao. Inside the tomb, he offered a ritual chicken and a prayer reassuring his father that he was a good son.

The younger Nauyac stopped his schooling in Baguio in 1957 when his father died. On his father's grave, he promised his father that he would be a good son.

Nauyac need not look for reassurance. This "city founder" has become a son of the Good Earth.

NAUYAC, the woodcarver who planted 100,000 trees. IKING SALVADOR

EXTRAORDINARY FOOD

Dagupan's 'presidential restaurant'

By Yolanda Fuertes
Dagupan City

AN ORDINARY *nipa*-roofed eatery facing the famous Tondaligan beach in Dagupan City, Matutina's is now known as the "presidential restaurant."

It is because President Macapagal-Arroyo takes her lunch there whenever she is in Pangasinan.

DAYTOY TI AMIANAN

Matutina's is not a first class, air-conditioned restaurant but the President and her entourage have to drive for 15 minutes from the downtown area to Barangay Bonoan-Gueset in Dagupan to feast on her favorite Pangasinan dishes.

During a luncheon meeting with local officials on Dec. 26, Ms Macapagal was seen eating grilled Bonoan *bangus*, prawn, steamed crab, *pinakbet* and mango and tomato salad. She had the local *bocayo* (coconut candy) for dessert.

"The food is very fresh here. (Dagupan City) Mayor (Benjamin) Lim explained why the *bangus* (milkfish) from Dagupan tastes different," the President told reporters.

"They talked about the good old days," said Albert Balingit, son of Don Pedro Balingit who is considered by the President as her foster father, when asked what the President and his father talked about while having lunch.

Don Pedro was a close friend and former classmate in high school of Ms Macapagal's father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal.

"Every time the President and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo go to Baguio, they drop by Dagupan to eat lunch," Balingit said.

He said the President, whom he called his foster sister, is "down-to-earth and a very simple woman."

The eatery is screened and candles are placed and lighted in each table to get rid of flies.

Balingit said he once accompanied then Senator Macapagal and her husband to a restaurant in Urdaneta City.

"But since they have tried Matutina's, they don't want to eat anywhere anymore," he said in Filipino.

"Mike and daughter Luli love the barbecue here. The president eats crabs, *bangus* and prawns. The two other children, Mikey and Dato, eat everything," Balingit told the INQUIRER.

Matutina's, owned by Marlyn Lorica, was put up by her mother Lydia in the 1970s. It was named after comedienne Matutina who played the maid with a falsetto in the popular sitcom "John en Marsha."

Welcome!
MATUTINA ANNEX-1
President
GLORIA MACAPAGAL
ARROYO
FEB. 18 2001

MATUTINA'S in Dagupan City never fails to be visited by President Macapagal-Arroyo and her family during her Northern Luzon sorties.

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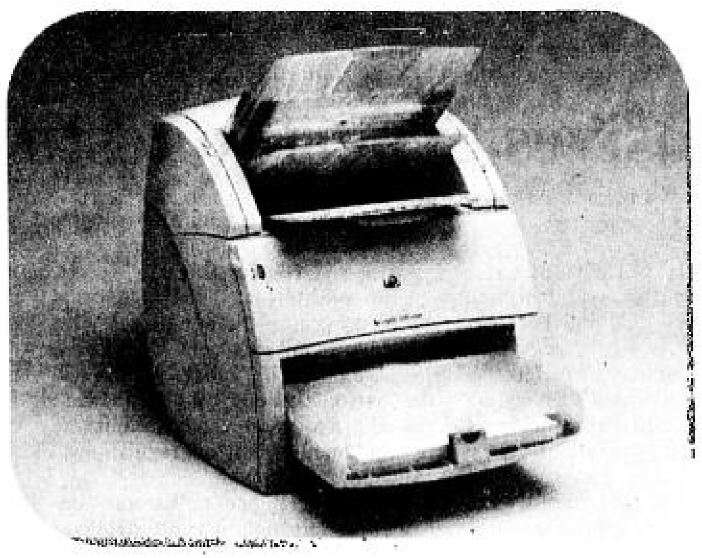

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Baron waited for his killer

(From page A1)

witness who reportedly saw the shooting.

Police now have in their custody two witnesses who saw how Cervantes was gunned down, said Insp. Sergio Gaarrobo, Station Investigation Division chief.

The witnesses yesterday were brought to the National Bureau of Investigation to describe the assailant for a police sketch, he said.

Gaarrobo said he and his men are trying to convince a security guard, who also witnessed the killing, to cooperate with the investigation.

Cervantes was sitting in front of a drugstore at the Times Street area when an unidentified man approached him from behind and shot him at the back of the head, according to a report by SPO1 Willy Dalawangbayan.

Cervantes was hit just above the left portion of his nape with the bullet exiting at his right temple, investigation showed.

The gunman then walked casually across the Alabang-Zapote Road and boarded a white Honda car, which was parked in front of a gasoline station, police said.

The car sped toward Alabang, police said.

Cervantes, a resident of 25 Evangeline Reyes St., BFRV, Las Piñas, was rushed to the nearby Perpetual Help Medical Center. He expired at 8:16 p.m.

Recovered from the crime scene was a spent shell of a 9 mm pistol, some identification cards and a cell phone.

"We have very good lead. No suspects at the moment but we have witnesses," according to police Supt. Thompson Lantion, head of the PNP Directorate for Police Community Relations.

Lantion added that they were not discounting the possibility that Cervantes was killed over personal matters.

IVY
HEIDELLE
JOLENE
NICK JOJO & ROSE
NASH
HEIDI & RAMI

HERE lies Baron Alexander Cervantes who was so secretive his own parents did not know if he was married and had children.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

YOU infighting angle

"It seems there's a rift within this group and this is what we are seriously looking into aside from the other angles such as personal grudges," said Lantion.

Boy Saycon, president of the Council for Philippine Affairs (Copa), confirmed the rift between Cervantes and some members of the YOU.

He said the rift deepened following Cervantes' disclosure on radio last week about a clandestine meeting between some members of the YOU and Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan (RAM) in Puerto Azul in Cavite ostensibly to hatch "Oplan Noche Buena," an alleged coup plot against the administration.

Saycon said Cervantes himself felt that other YOU members were angry with him following his disclosure of the alleged coup plot.

"*Mainit na ako sa aking mga kasama. Mukhang pinagbabantaan na nila ako. Sana mapakiusapan natin sila para maayos ito* (My colleagues are angry. I hope we can talk to them so we can straighten things out)," Saycon quoted Cervantes as saying during a phone conversation on Monday afternoon.

Golez consultant

On Monday morning, Cervantes had gone to Saycon's residence in Alabang, Muntinlupa, to deliver a YOU statement denying its participation in the coup plot, an intelligence report and a gift from National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

Cervantes was a consultant of Golez. "He's a consultant on general security matters," Golez confirmed in a phone interview.

Golez said he had known Cervantes since the protest actions against then President Joseph Estrada late last year and took him in as consultant sometime March or April 2001.

Intelligence report

Cervantes stayed at the Saycon residence that Monday morning from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Unable to wait any longer for Saycon, he left. Shortly after Saycon arrived home, Cervantes phoned him.

Saycon disclosed that the intelligence report from Cervantes "further explains the destabilization plot" and contains the names of four YOU members and two RAM members allegedly involved in the plot."

On the instruction of Golez, who was abroad at the time, Saycon turned the report over to the police.

Director Edgardo Aglipay, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said that police would also look into Cervantes' disclosure of the coup plot in connection with his killing.

Heated exchange

Cervantes had a heated exchange with retired Col. Romeo Lim and retired Capt. Proceso Maligalig, reportedly both of RAM, on separate occasions on radio last week following his disclosure of the coup plot.

Both Lim and Maligalig had accused Cervantes of being a self-proclaimed spokesperson of YOU and charged that he had no right to speak on behalf of the group.

Lantion, who had gone to the crime scene along with Aglipay right after the killing, called on Lim and Maligalig as well as YOU members to "give their statements to the police so we can have a clearer picture of what really happened," he said.

Cervantes was embroiled in another controversy last week when he disclosed on radio about the meeting between members of YOU and RAM in Puerto Azul, fueling coup rumors.

When sought by the INQUIRER for comment, he tried to downplay his disclosure, saying he was not sure if the meeting pushed through, and if it did, it could have been just a Christmas party.

"If there were YOU members present, they belonged to the splinter groups. The coup rumors did not come from YOU," Cervantes had said in an interview.

His statements drew angry reactions from YOU and RAM members.

Col. Romeo Lim said both the RAM and the YOU made the joint decision to disown Cervantes after they suspected him of circulating the rumor that the two groups were plotting to overthrow the Macapagal administration.

Political angle

President Macapagal yesterday said that politics may have something to do with the Cervantes killing.

"I think politics had something to do with it," Ms Macapagal said in an interview over dzMM.

President Macapagal did not elaborate on the supposed political link of the Cervantes killing and qualified her earlier statement as "only my speculations."

"I'm leaving it up to investigators to determine who killed (Cervantes) and why," President Macapagal said.

The President, however, admitted that the killing of Cervantes can acquire a political color although she did not say how.

"It's very sad," President Macapagal said of Cervantes' death. "I don't know how politics will not be mixed into it."

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said that it would be best not to speculate about the killing of Cervantes.

"Again, I would say that one of the primary causes of destabilization is talking about destabilization," Reyes said in an interview at Camp Aguinaldo.

"I think we should stop speculating and just wait for the results of the investigation being conducted and we proceed from there," he added.

Golez himself declined to say what leads are being pursued by his office to find out who was behind the fatal shooting of his consultant.

"It's a confidential process," a tight-lipped Golez said. ***With reports from Inquirer wires***

Cervantes led very secretive life, says father

(From page A1)

The elder Cervantes said it would be very hard for the family to speculate about his son's fatal shooting as he did not receive death threats.

Security risk

Military intelligence agents had once considered Baron Alxander Cervantes a "risk to security."

The assessment was based on a background check conducted by an intelligence unit that interviewed former members of the Young Officers' Union (YOU) and other officers.

These interviews revealed that Cervantes was a "liar" and a "great impersonator," said a military report dated March 12, 2001.

"Subject should never be trusted. His ploy in the world of media and politics is an indication that he seeks fame and position with financial benefits in the present administration," the report said.

But at the time of his death Cervantes was a consultant at the office of National Security Adviser Roilo Golez though this was not publicly being announced.

His public persona was that of a "cofounder," "spokesperson" and "organizer" of the once rebellious YOU.

Also known as Mark and Bong, Cervantes, he moved in and out of military and political circles.

He served as political affairs adviser of then presidential candidate Salvador Laurel in 1992.

On Aug. 9, 2000, the INQUIRER came out with a banner story quoting Cervantes that a "new group" called Aklas Pilipino had been put up to urge then President Joseph Estrada "to reform."

Cervantes warned that the group was prepared to take "drastic action if the administration would not mend its ways."

According to profiles about him by the intelligence community, Cervantes moved in and out of places that often left people asking in secret: where did this guy come from?

Not insider

Though Cervantes styled himself as a YOU leader, he was never an insider nor was he involved in the coup attempts against the Aquino administration.

Cervantes had calling cards identifying himself both as a member of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa (RAM) and a "captain" although he was not a captain in the Army.

He even introduced himself as Chief Inspector of the Philippine National Police and an alumnus of the PNP Academy.

As a college student of the Colegio de San Juan de Letran, he represented the school in the so-called Nationalist Students Alliance (NSA) which supported then dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the 1986 snap election.

Cervantes was said to have befriended Marcos loyalist Col. Rey Cabauatan.

After the 1986 Edsa revolt, the NSA was transformed into an anti-communist organization to counter radical groups in Metro Manila campuses.

Cervantes, then a cadet officer of the Citizens Military Training Unit in Letran, got acquainted with young RAM officers who later organized the YOU.

Military records, however, showed that he was not among the YOU members who were tried under the general court martial after the 1989 coup attempt.

The same records showed that Cervantes entered the military service with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant (inactive) in March 1988 and was called to active duty in October 1988.

A picture of the commissioning rites where Fidel Ramos, then Armed Forces chief of staff, was shaking the hand of Cervantes, has been placed on top of the slain soldier's coffin.

Cervantes applied for regular commission and was eventually appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the regular force effective Dec. 31, 1989.

Cervantes was with the Army starting 1990 and was assigned with the 67th Infantry Battalion sometime in 1993.

Deserter

Records also showed that Cervantes was "tried for desertion" in the same year, declared absent without official leave (AWOL) and dropped from the rolls in 1994.

When the Ramos administration was holding peace talks with the RAM/YOU, he volunteered to do secretariat work for RAM. Though he was not part of the coup attempts, his name was included in the list of officers and soldiers who were later granted amnesty.

Also during the early years of the Ramos administration, Cervantes hang around the Foreign Liaison Office in Camp Crame and was even seen using computers there.

Cervantes was reinstated in the Army in 1998 and was recommended to take the Infantry Officers Basic Course the same year.

The course was canceled and Cervantes dropped out of sight without officially informing his superiors, hence he was again dropped from the rolls in September 1998.

While in the military, he underwent the basic airborne course and the Scout Ranger orientation course.

In April 2000 during the term of Estrada, Cervantes, then no longer an organic member of the military, reportedly tried to join the Presidential Security Group but was not entertained.

Hunger for popularity

The military report on his background said Cervantes had hoped to cover up his 'dishonorable (dismissal) and his "insatiable hunger for fame and popularity" by stirring up trouble with reports of coup and dragging himself and the YOU into the limelight.

They noted that Cervantes had been presenting himself as a captain despite the fact that he was never promoted.

The report said that Cervantes had also introduced himself as chair of the Strategic Intelligence Management Group of the YOU, a unit that does not exist.

The document said that Cervantes was the same "Capt. Magtanggol" who had gone to media several times.

"It could be for financial purpose or he might just be a front for a group that's really out to destabilize the present government and as such should be considered as a risk to security," the report said.

Edsa II rallies

He regularly attended the Edsa II rallies. He was sighted at the Edsa Shrine on Jan. 19, 2001 during the press conference called by top military officials, led by then Armed Forces Chief of Staff Angelo Reyes, to announce their defection to the opposition.

In March 2001, a statement supposedly issued by the "YOU-Army Branch" gave the Macapagal administration "72 hours to enforce the law" starting with the investigation of scandals allegedly committed during the Ramos and Aquino administrations.

Signed by a fictitious Capt. Bonifacio Magtanggol, the statement also denounced the appointment of former communist defector Col. Victor Corpus as head of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Days later, Cervantes issued a statement urging the Macapagal administration "to look deeply into the matter and treat the issues and grievances objectively."

Cervantes said that while the Magtanggol statement was issued by a YOU "local chapter," its deadline of 72 hours was not supported by the YOU "high command."

Source of leak

A few days ago, Cervantes was the supposed source of information alleging that certain RAM and YOU personalities had secretly met in a Cavite resort to plot against the government.

Hours before he was shot, Col. Romeo Lim of RAM and YOU issued a statement disowning him as its spokesperson and co-founder.

While RAM and YOU disowned him, Letran had honored its alumnus. In February last year Cervantes was honored by Letran for his role in the Edsa II revolution.

Cervantes shared the award with fellow Letranites and Council of Philippine Affairs colleagues Pastor "Boy" Saycon and former Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Cervantes obtained a degree of Bachelor of Science major in Management and Marketing from Letran.

A resumé of Cervantes obtained by the INQUIRER indicated that he attended four more schools after graduating from Letran.

He took up economics, public administration, South East Asian Studies and Customs administration. He also indicated that he was a law graduate of Arellano University.

He was also a member of the different political and military organizations such as Philippine National Police Academy Alumni Association, AFP National Reservists Association, Association of Law Students, Parachutists Association, International Photo Patrol, PAL Mountaineering Club, and International Organization of Journalists in Russia, among others.

He said he also worked with Wilson Gamboa during the 1987 senatorial elections.

Since Cervantes' integration into the military, his father said he and his family never knew anything about his military affairs and other activities.

"But he was a very loving son. He cared for my wife and me. He was very generous," the elder Cervantes said.

Gift

For Christmas, Rac said his son gave him a "very special gift, which I don't want to discuss anymore."

Last Monday, Rac said he and his 60-year-old wife Carol were in the market, not knowing that their son had left the house to meet someone in front of a drugstore at the corner of Times Street and Alabang-Zapote Road in Las Piñas.

At the market, Rac said his son sent him a text message requesting that he buy him two plastic bottles of non-fat milk.

Cervantes was still not home when his parents returned from the market, the father said. They were later informed that their son had been gunned down.

The bottles of milk Cervantes had requested are placed under his coffin.

Explosives expert to testify vs Miraflor

(From page A1)

Corpus added Sotto would also testify that Miraflor asked him to keep 100 blocks of C4 and TNT explosives.

Corpus said he was surprised that Isafp teams had recovered so many explosives, more than twice the 40 blocks originally procured by Miraflor from the Philippine Navy.

"The explosives recovered were more than what were officially issued to Miraflor when he was SRU chief. We want to find out why he had to source a huge amount of C4 and TNT blocks," Corpus said.

"The investigation into his role in destabilization plots is ongoing."

Confined to barracks

Also yesterday, Navy chief Vice Admiral Victorino Hingco, said Miraflor had been under the custody of the Naval Education and Training Command in Zambales since Dec. 30 and that no charge had yet been leveled against him.

"(The case is under) preliminary investigation," Hingco said in an interview in Camp Aguinaldo.

Hingco also disclosed that no other officers had been "detained," noting that only Miraflor had been "confined to barracks."

Armed Forces of the Philippines' chief of staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva reiterated that Miraflor was being investigated for his unit's failure to return the explosives.

Unsafe place

However, he hinted that a case could be filed because the explosives were placed in an unsafe place.

"A total of 100 blocks of C-4 and detonation devices, and these were placed in a location which was not safe or even sanctioned by our regulations," Villanueva exclaimed.

Asked to comment on Lacson's denial of participation in any destabilization plot, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said Lacson side would be considered in an investigation.

"Well, that's his side of the story and we will have that considered by our investigators," Reyes said.

Villanueva echoed Reyes, saying, "I am not willing to go further than what the present investigation, which is in progress, uncovers. I would not speculate on whatever involvement of personalities on this matter."

'National threat'

But the chair of the House defense committee said the military establishment should not lightly take the discovery of a large cache of deadly explosives from a known supporter of a leading member of the opposition such as Lacson.

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. declared, "This should be seriously investigated because if these explosives can flatten several buildings, their possession in the wrong hands represents a serious national threat," Pichay said.

"We should not take this lightly because the explosives can be used to destabilize the government," he said.

Pichay said that if Miraflor did not intend to use the explosives to destabilize the Macapagal administration, he could sell them to a group that will use them for the purpose.

However, Pichay ruled out the launching of a House inquiry, saying he felt that the military could do the job.

Court martial

Corpus disclosed that Miraflor had secured 60 blocks of C4 military explosives from the Navy inventory on Sept. 17, 2000.

Of the hoard, Corpus said 55 blocks, had been accounted for and turned over recently by Sotto to the Naval Intelligence Special Force.

Corpus said a post-operation report revealed that 4.5 pounds (2.5 kilos) of C4 and TNT explosives and timing devices were found "missing." He said the explosives were "more than enough" wipe out military establishments, oil depots, level Malacañang, other government offices, and major business establishments.

Corpus added that in August 2001, SWAG's Sarmiento ordered the former SRU men to turn over the explosives but that Miraflor defied the order, in the process putting at risk the lives of his fellow military men.

For this reason, Corpus said, Miraflor and other SRU personnel and officials would be subjected to court martial proceedings because of their alleged involvement in destabilization efforts related to the opposition's plot to overthrow the government.

"Unaccounted explosives used by the SRU during their operational activities while attached to the former PAOCTF were recovered by Isafp teams," Corpus said.

Corpus said Miraflor would be subjected to a court martial on charges of "fraud against the government and conduct unbecoming a military officer and a gentleman."

The offenses violated the Articles of War, the Isafp chief said.

Destabilization

Corpus said that the Isafp, acting on intelligence reports, was able to confirm that Miraflor and other former PAOCTF officials such as Lacson's deputy Chief Supt. Francisco Zubia Jr. met on Dec. 19 at the Aberdeen Court in Makati City to "plan and launch destabilization efforts against the government using the C4 and TNT explosive devices."

Lacson was supposed to attend and host that meeting but the opposition senator failed to show up, Corpus said.

"The mere mention of possession of C4 and TNT explosives during the Dec. 19 meeting prompted Isafp intelligence teams to conduct random inspections on Dec. 21 and 26 at the barracks of former SRU officers identified with Lacson," Corpus said. "The timing was quite obvious. It was the anniversary of the Dec. 30 bombings."

The blocks of explosives were found in the locker of Sotto, Miraflor's former SRU explosives unit expert who was educated and trained in the United States, he said.

The explosives should have been kept in an "igloo," designed to contain the impact and damage due to an accidental explosion. Putting the explosives in lockers inside a military barracks was placing the lives of soldiers at risk, Corpus said.

Motive

"What was his motive? Miraflor clearly intended to keep the explosives and timing devices for his personal gain using Sotto to achieve his purpose," Corpus said. "And he even acquired more explosives."

Intelligence documents showed that recovered from the locker of Sotto on Dec. 21 were 15 pieces of C4 blocks weighing 1.25 lbs. (1 kilo) each. Also found in the locker were 12 blocks of TNT explosives, a detonation cord measuring 15 feet (5 meters), two pieces of 40mm cartridges, three boxes of nonelectric blasting caps, two pieces of one-fourth pound TNT, 57 pieces electric blasting caps and seven boxes of igniter blasting fuses.

Sotto said that the explosives found in his lockers came from Miraflor.

On Dec. 26, Sotto led the Isafp teams to the rest of the explosives that were hidden, allegedly upon the orders of Miraflor, at the Navy SEAL's diving locker.

Recovered were 40 blocks of C4, a field bag containing three blocks of one-pound TNT, a 21-meter waterproof time fuse, a 3-meter waterproof time fuse, offensive and rifle grenades, among others.

Sotto also turned over the rest of the C4 explosives, making the total recovery to 100.5 blocks.

Following Sotto's confession, the Naval Intelligence Security Force invited Miraflor for questioning on Dec. 28. Miraflor showed up and was detained forthwith.

In a separate affidavit, Miraflor admitted that he had indeed given the explosives to Sotto and ordered him to keep the explosives. However, he said, he also ordered that these be turned over to Sarmiento.

Miraflor also denied having instigated a plot to overthrow the government. He said the Dec. 19 activity was not a meeting but a Christmas party "purely among friends and their respective families."

Corpus said Miraflor had yet to account for the missing C4 and TNT explosives. Miraflor would also be asked to explain how and where he was able to get the 40 of the 100.5 blocks of C4 without officially procuring them from the Navy's armory. ***With reports from Martin P. Marfil and Juliet Labog Javellana***

Checkmate tourney on today

THE MILO Checkmate final selection tournament kicks of at 9 a.m. today, Jan. 2, at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, Vito Cruz, Manila. Nineteen regular enrollees of the Milo Checkmate clinic who passed a series of eliminations and a semifinal last year will vie for the nine final slots to compose the team that will compete to the United States in June.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Kafelnikov overcomes Vacek

DOHA— Top-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov overcame a sluggish start before coasting past the Czech Republic's Daniel Vacek in the first round of the $1 million Qatar Open here on Monday. Kafelnikov was given a serious workout in the first set by the lowly ranked Vacek, but the Russian then dug deep into his tremendous reserves of energy to unleash a series of crisp groundstrokes to close out the match 7-6 (7-0), 6-4. *AFP*

Work to give, not for money

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

AS a journalist, I needed to start the year right. So I worked. No, the better description is, I wrote. Thus, you have this column.

What a day to choose: The first day of the year. There couldn't be any better day. Puts you on track. Makes the habit in orbit.

Isn't it that we have a job to do?

We don't work, we don't eat.

We don't work, we can't give.

Even the rich need to work their butts out. Besides needing to count their money at night, they work at day to double their money at the bank. How I wish the rich put to heart Francis Bacon's call: "Money is like muck, not good except it be spread."

I said "happy new year" to a lady tending a tee house of The Country Club a day before New Year's Day. What a friend of mine did was give a hundred bucks to the lady.

"We are not rich my friend," he would tell me later as we were heading for the next tee box. "But I'm sure we have more than that lady in the tee house."

A hundred bucks can buy a bag of *pancit guisado* for a poor man's *noche buena*.

To the wealthy, a hundred bucks is but a tip to a watch-your-car boy.

But in my observations in the big city, it is very usual for me to encounter the wealthy not being very generous. I often see the not-so-very-rich giving more than the very rich. When it comes to tipping, I can count in my fingers those with money that are really very ungenerous; usually, they are the old rich. When the not-so-very-rich give out more, they are sarcastically called "galantes." Hemingway said: "Be liberal with your tips to the waiters, for you will encounter them again." Next to home cooking, a waiter/waitress is your secret to good food.

The Beatles became millionaires before anyone of them turned 25. It is said John, Paul, George and Ringo can live five lifetimes apiece and still, not one of them could consume the wealth each had amassed as a Beatle. Beatlemania has made them the richest music group of all time. At age 40, John was gunned down by a nut in 1980; his sons Julian (by Cynthia) and Sean (by Yoko Ono) continue to live like kings. George was 58 when he died last November after a four-year battle with cancer; his only son, Dhani (24), has a future laden with roses. Will Julian, Sean and Dhani mishandle the wealth they had inherited as to just spend them carelessly till they are gone? I don't think so. Modern-day lawyers have designed it not to be so.

Each one of us has his own way of handling money. Some love their money as they love themselves. Others love their money as they love their neighbors. But listen to Jonathan Swift: "Nothing is so hard for those who abound in riches as to conceive how others can be in want."

The trick is, not really falling in love with money. Proverbs 11:28: "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall."

Now make way for my Insan Taby: "Always, give that money without hesitation. It's dirty anyway."

Jordan nearly sets mark as Wizards spank Nets

WASHINGTON — New Jersey forward Kenyon Martin made a big mistake when he mentioned his back spasms to Michael Jordan.

Upon learning this news, Jordan went to work and nearly set an NBA record. He scored 22 points in a succession, part of a 45-point game in the Washington Wizards' 98-76 victory in the NBA Monday over the Nets in the MCI Center's annual New Year's Eve game.

"Kenyon Martin told me he had a back problem," Jordan said. "I don't think he wants to tell me that. I just started attacking from that point on."

Coming off a 51-point game and a six-pointer before that, Jordan made 16 of 32 shots and 12 of 13 free throws with 10 rebounds and seven assists. He scored the last 10 points of the first half and the first 12 of the third quarter, singlehandedly accounting for a 19-3 run that put Washington ahead 56-45. The Nets never got closer than nine the rest of the game.

"Michael's feeling better," Washington coach Doug Collins said. "I guess that's an understatement, huh?"

The 22-point streak was one short of the league record, set by Jordan when he had 23 in a row for Chicago against Atlanta on April 16, 1987. Jordan scored 61 in that game.

The Wizards have won 11 of their last 13 games and went 11-4 for the month, tying the team record for most wins in December. They went 2-13 last December, the worst in franchise history.

"My knees are feeling good," said the 38-year-old Jordan, who has been battling tendinitis all season. "I'm feeling a lot better. Once I get in a rhythm, I can get it going, so I think that'll keep all those old-player conversations down a little bit."

The Nets suffered their worst loss of the season, had their three-game winning streak snapped and finished the month 9-5, one win short of their best December. They were fighting history against Jordan, having lost 23 consecutive games on Jordan's home court in a streak that's more than 16 years old.

"There's no doubt about it, he was good, but I don't think MJ is why we lost the game," coach Byron Scott said. "We got a royal butt-kicking on the boards."

Jordan toyed with every defender who guarded him, from Martin to Richard Jefferson to Van Horn - and even arched a running 5-meter (16-foot) jumper over 2.1-meter (7-foot) center Todd MacCulloch. The last basket of the 22-point run was a spin move around Martin that left the defender flat-footed and the crowd gasping.

Jordan frequently dribbled between his legs, palmed the ball high above his defender and wasn't shy about driving to the basket. The only move that didn't work was a high-step that led to an offensive foul for a push-off on Van Horn late in the first half. A couple of minutes later, however, Jordan got Van Horn into the air with a pump fake and got a three-point play, the start of the 22-point run.

Jordan had nine in the first quarter, 23 at the half and 42 after three.

The Nets had their only run when Jordan left the game for about a minute in the first quarter, going on a 7-1 spurt to take a 23-14 lead. Then Jordan returned and got an assist on the next possession, hitting Hubert Davis for an open 3-pointer.

"He was amazing again," Collins said.

Bulls 90, Bucks 83

In Chicago, Ron Mercer scored 20 points, and Marcus Fizer had 17 points and a career-high 14 rebounds as Chicago beat Milwaukee to claim their second consecutive game.

The Bulls (6-23) improved to 2-0 under coach Bill Cartwright, who took over last week when Tim Floyd resigned. It's the Bulls' first two-game winning streak since last April 17-18, when they beat New Jersey and Philadelphia on the road.

Milwaukee was without leading scorers Ray Allen and Glenn Robinson, who sat with injuries. Sam Cassell scored 28 to lead the Bucks (18-10), who had a four-game winning streak snapped. Tim Thomas added 19.

Heat 89, Pacers 87

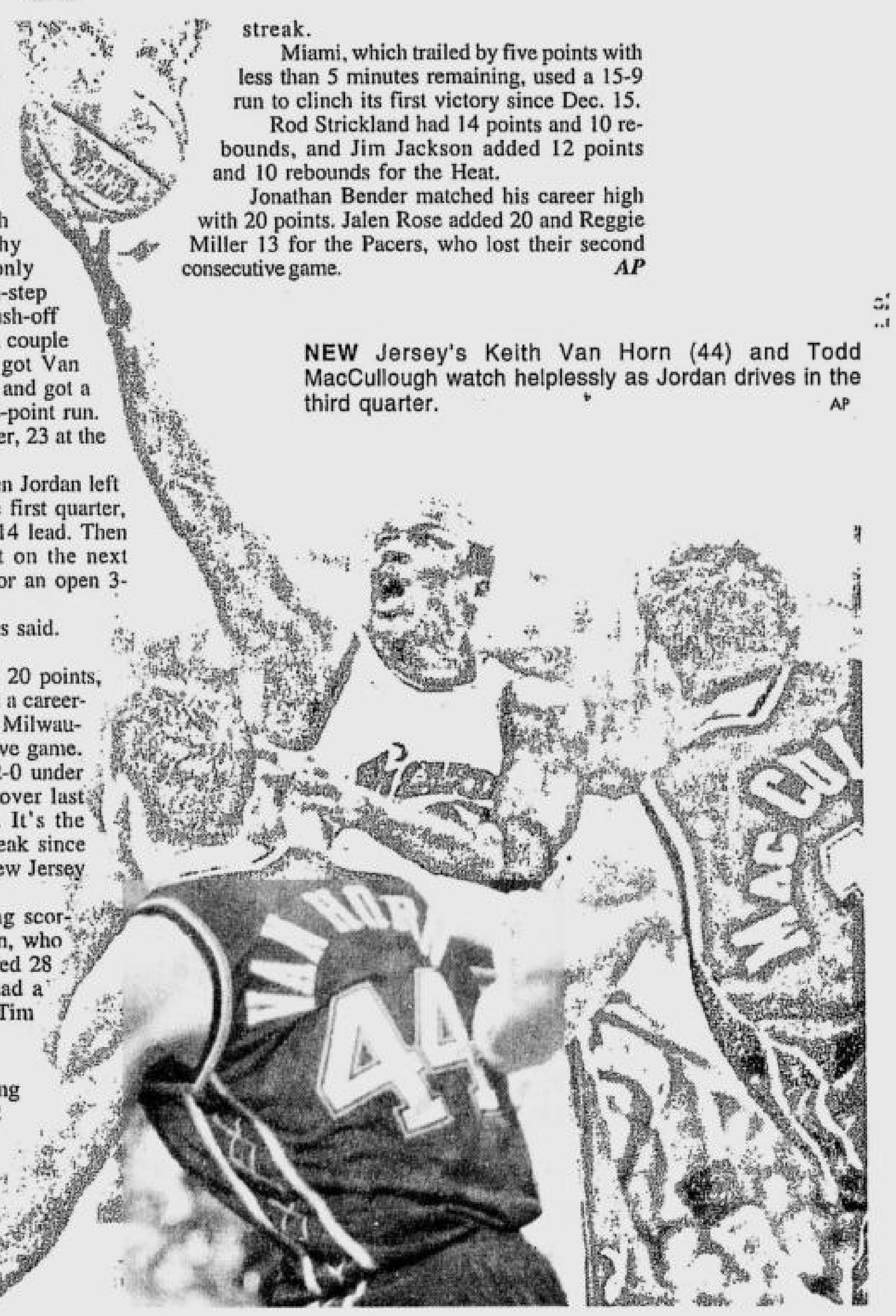
In Indianapolis, Alonzo Mourning made a hook shot in the final 47.2 seconds and Eddie Jones scored 29 points to lead Miami to a victory over Indiana.

Mourning, who finished with 19 points, scored over Jermaine O'Neal to snap the Heat's six-game losing streak.

Miami, which trailed by five points with less than 5 minutes remaining, used a 15-9 run to clinch its first victory since Dec. 15.

Rod Strickland had 14 points and 10 rebounds, and Jim Jackson added 12 points and 10 rebounds for the Heat.

Jonathan Bender matched his career high with 20 points. Jalen Rose added 20 and Reggie Miller 13 for the Pacers, who lost their second consecutive game. *AP*



NEW Jersey's Keith Van Horn (44) and Todd MacCullough watch helplessly as Jordan drives in the third quarter. AP

Ethiopia bet wins footrace

SAO PAULO, Brazil —Tesfaye Jifar of Ethiopia won the St. Silvester road race Monday, beating a field of about 15,000 athletes from around the world to claim the 77th annual year-end event.

Jifar, who won the New York City Marathon in November, completed the 15-kilometer (9.3-mile) course through the wide avenues and narrow streets of South America's largest city in 44 minutes, 15 seconds for a top prize of 12,000 reals (about $ 5,200).

Kenya's Guilbert Okari was second, finishing 17 seconds behind Jifar in 44:32. Tanzania's John Yuda crossed the finish line five seconds later and took third in 44:37.

Earlier, Maria Zeferina Balldaia of Brazil bested a field of about 2,000 women athletes to win the women's division of the race in 52:12 to win 12,000 reals (about $ 5,200). *AP*

Whatever happened to Monico's appeal?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

(I DON'T want to start the new year by complaining, but in my last piece (IOC should replace Elizalde, Dec. 31) the word "shirking" was missing from the original sentence. "He is shirking from responsibility." Also, it should have been "intervened in the last POC election" instead of "intervene dint he last POC election." Sorry)

MORE than four months ago, Bacolod City Rep. Monico Puentevella urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to release the five percent share of the cash strapped Philippine Sports Commission from the money-rich Philippine Gaming and Amusement Corp. Yet until now nothing has been heard of Monico's appeal to GMA. Obviously, the plea has fallen on deaf ears, leading many to ask: Is this merely another *palabas*, another clear case of *pangakong napako*? A moro-moro? *Paki-esplika lamang po, kaibigang* Monico.

In his privilege speech last August, the former PSC commissioner said he would seek the help of the President in restoring their original PSC share of five percent from Pagcor's income under Republic Act 6847, which created the PSC in 1990. Estimated at roughly P250 million, the funds were supposed to go to the PSC for the support of the athletes and its sports programs.

However, during the administration of former President Fidel V. Ramos, the PSC share was cut to three percent although FVR, using Presidential funds to disburse at his discretion, gave more to the PSC then that what was intended for sports. But according to Puentevella, "the picture totally changed when President Joseph Estrada took over because not even half of the PSC funds reached the agency."

By the way, sports leaders should expect more difficult times in 2002 because the new national budget is again biased against sports. Of course, this is no longer surprising. Time and time again, our government has regarded sports as a poor relation and treated it as one compared to the other departments and agencies which always get special care and attention.

To illustrate. The new P780.8 billion budget allocates a whopping P95.290B for education, P60.244B for defense and P48.043B for public work while earmarking a measly P3.229B for the Office of the President, which administers the PSC. Recall also that Congress even slashed the General Appropriation budget of the PSC for grassroots development, maintenance, repair and construction of facilities and the salaries of PSC officials and its more than 400 employees. This is totally incomprehensive. Why? Because, in every country of the world, the government is responsible for the health and fitness of its people. Where is fairness here?

RACING TIPS

AT SAN LAZARO
BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Roman Dance 2. Hinobaan's Pride
Race 2—1. Velocity 2. Real Material 3. Prickly Heat
Race 3—1. Emancipated Belle 2. Pep Talk
Race 4—1. Rapid Strike 2. Dressed to Impress 3. Golden Quest 4. The Magician
Race 5—1. Jackpot Baby 2. Battle Tested 3. Native Talent/Perfect Gift 4. Jules 5. Extremely Sharp
Race 6—1. Cardinal Rule 2. Hearts on Fire 3. Win More 4. Cristel Jay 5. Above All 6. Perry's Will
Race 7—1. Latin Beat 2. Hacker
Race 8—1. Hotrod 2. Winning Rose 3. Ray Moon 4. Triple Joy 5. Golden Child 6. Dragon Doding

Busy triathlon season up

TRIATHLON will have another busy season in 2002 with the second Asian Duathlon Championships in November as the main highlight, Tom Carrasco, Triathlon Association of the Philippines president, announced yesterday.

Subic International Triathlon, one of the top stops in Asia Cup series, will celebrate its 10th anniversary on June 2. Australian Nicole Hackett, 2000 world champion, who established the country's all-comers record last year, is expected to defend her title.

The first major event will be the National Triathlon Trials and third Inter-Club Championships (The Iloilo Challenge) set for Iloilo City Jan. 26.

A sprint triathlon in Ayala Alabang will kick off on Jan. 6 the season that will also see the Fit & Tri Youth Triathlon series for 7-to-18-year-olds going national from March to December.

The second National Age-Group series will also run from March to December with five legs on tap.

For the sturdier bunch, the Philippine Half-Ironman (3-kilomenter swim, 90-km bike and 21-km run (half-marathon) will be staged in October with the male and female champions earning berths in the All-Japan Strongman.

The national triathletes will see action in the September Asian Triathlon Championships in China where the men's team will be gunning to better its fourth-place finish in 2001 and the Asian Cup series. Philippine record breakers will represent the country in the World Triathlon Championships in Cancun, Mexico, in November.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY
LORENZO MANGUIAT

POOL: World Pool League 2001 at 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. (r) on ESPN

Rack 'Em Up—Mosconi Cup Finals at 7 p.m. on ESPN

BASKETBALL: NBA—Portland Trailblazers vs Los Angeles Clippers at 10 a.m. (r – 4:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.) on ESPN

GOLF: PGA—The Tour Championship, Third Round at 2 p.m. (r), Final Round at 10:30 p.m. on Star Sports

Senior PGA Tour Year In Review 2001 at 2:30 p.m. on Star Sports

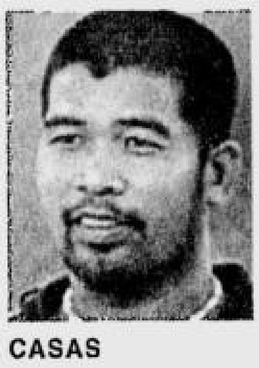
BOWLING: CGU Asian Bowling Tour—Women's Highlights at 6 p.m. on Star Sports

JOLET'S AWARDS

Multi-titled Jolet Jao of Shell advance-YRS Racing Team (second from left) displays his trophies for winning the overall championship in the recent National Super Bike Series held at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas. With Jao in photo during the formal awarding ceremony are Raffy Capinpin, Shell Asean consumer marketing manager; Gregorio "Yoyong" Buncio, team manager; Serge Bernal, Shell brand manager for motorcycle oil; and Edwin Laset, Shell brand manager for gas engine oil.

Casas, Cuello head pros in Tour qualifying cast

BY JONG ARCANO



CASAS

REIGNING Philippine Open champion Cassius Casas and at least a dozen other pros will compete in a 54-hole eliminations for five country exempt slots in the 2002 Davidoff Asian PGA Tour starting tomorrow at the Eastridge Golf Club course in Binangonan.

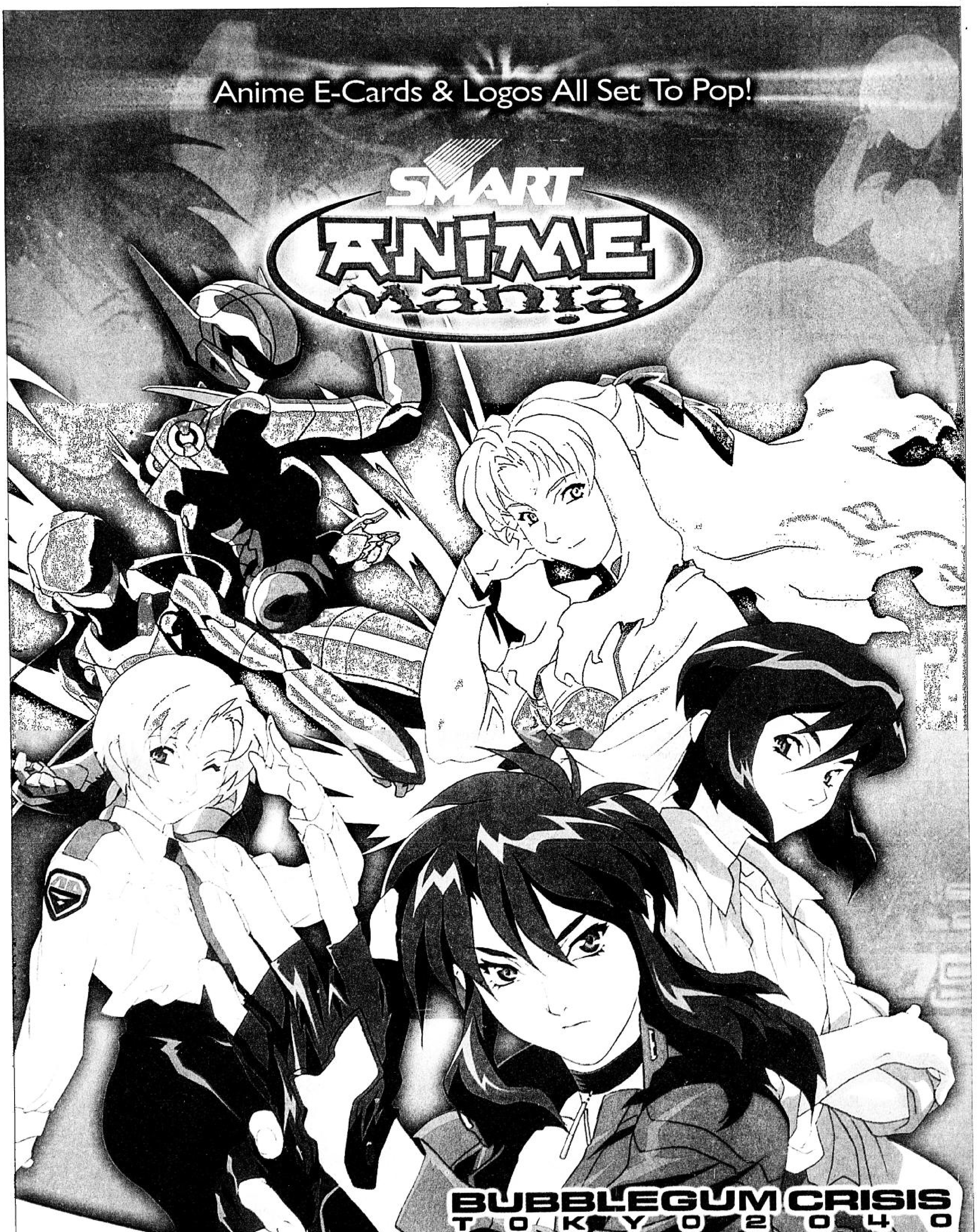
Casas, who lost his Asian Tour card after failing to make it to the Top 60 last season, will be joined by topnotch pros like Rodrigo Cuello, Robert Pactolerin, Melvin Eso, Dan Cruz and Eddie Bagtas in the qualifying event conducted by the Professional Golfers Association of the Philippines.

Jun Bustamante, president of the PGAP, said that the tourney will also serve as a warmup for Casas and Cuello who are expected to see action in the Davidoff Tour Qualifying School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, two weeks from now.

The Philippine Open which Casas won last year will return to the APGA fold this coming March with Wack Wack keeping the hosting rights.

Bustamante, who just took over the PGAP presidency from Bagtas, added that the qualifying was originally set last week but had to be rescheduled since most pros had to come from the provinces to spend Christmas with their families.

Only Japan World Cupper Danny Zarate and Gerald Rosales were able to secure their regular tour cards for the coming season last year.



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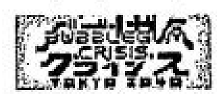
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Group Graphics List of Keywords	GROUP BC and send to 235
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Picture Messages List of Keywords	PIC BC and send to 235
Picture Messages	PIC <keyword> and send to 235
Screen Savers List of Keywords	SAVER BC and send to 235
Screen Savers**	SAVER <keyword> and send to 235
Help on the Commands	HELP and send to 235

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METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

- Metro Manila trash piling up on streets A20
- A gift from Erap: Joy & innocence A20

18 fires hit Metro Manila

Estrada's Boracay Mansion among those hit

BY ALCUIN PAPA, PHILIP TUBEZA AND AGNES DONATO

A TOTAL of 18 fires broke out in the metropolis at the start of the new year, including a portion of the controversial Boracay mansion in Quezon City said to belong to former President Joseph Estrada, according to a report of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

According to the MMDA's Metrobase, the 24-hour monitoring arm of the agency which compiled the report, a total of 175 persons were reported to have been injured from firecrackers and stray bullets during the New Year revelry.

The Metrobase said most of the fires occurred from 8 p.m. of December 31 up to 8:22 a.m. yesterday, the first day of the year 2002.

The first recorded fire, said to have originated from baby rockets called "kuwitis," occurred about 8:30 p.m. at Barrio Visaya Barangay Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City.

The fire reached the 4th alarm and was controlled by fire fighters at 10:10 p.m.

In Quezon City, at least eight families were rendered homeless in a fire that destroyed P2 million worth of property.

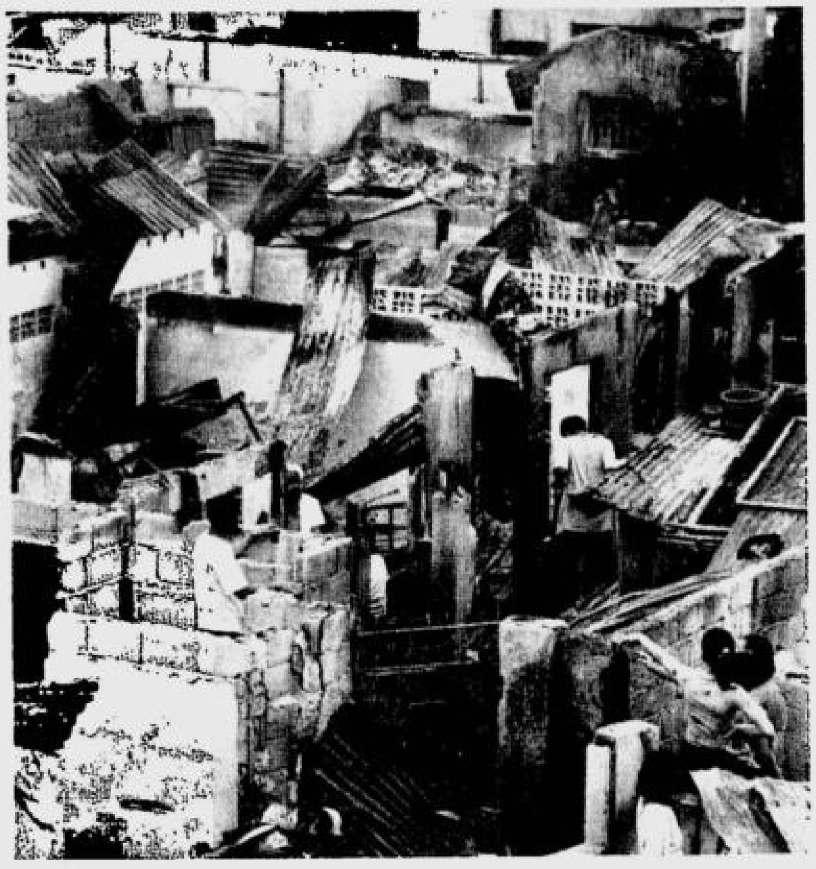
SFO4 Jose Rodriguez of the Bureau of Fire Protection said the fire gutted seven houses in Villa Beatriz, Barangay Commonwealth about 11:30 p.m. Tuesday.

No one was reported injured.

An hour later, one of the nipa huts at the poolside of the famous Boracay Mansion on 11th Street, New Manila, was razed after it was hit by firecrackers.

The mansion is said to be a gift from Mr. Estrada to former starlet Laarni Enriquez.

18 FIRES/ A20



THIS is all that remains of the scores of houses that were gutted in a fire in Maypajo, Caloocan City yesterday morning.
VAL HANDUMON

Son of Vic Sotto, Dina Bonnevie hurt in UP crash

BY AGNES E. DONATO

SOTTO

The 20-YEAR-OLD son of movie stars Vic Sotto and Dina Bonnevie was injured when the car he was driving slammed into another vehicle inside the UP Diliman campus in Quezon City on New Year's Eve.

Vittorio "Oyo Boy" Sotto of Alabang Village, Muntinlupa, sustained minor injuries.

He was discharged from the St. Luke's Medical Center.

Police identified the other victims as Vicente Loreno, 37; Jesus Malate, 32; and Abelardo Dehardo, 51, all of UP campus.

Malate and Dehardo sustained abrasions and contusions and were taken to the university infirmary for treatment.

Loreno, who was driving the other vehicle, was transferred to the East Avenue Medical Center after his ear bled.

Initial reports showed the collision took place at about 6:30 p.m. at the intersection of Osmeña and Roces avenues inside the UP campus.

Sotto was reportedly crossing Osmeña Avenue when the Toyota Rav-4 he was driving slammed into Loreno's owner-type jeep (NJP 527).

As a result of the collision, Sotto's car hit a traffic light post and smashed into an acacia tree while the owner-type jeep spun from the impact.

Police records showed that the Rav-4 (KRF 800) Sotto was driving was registered under a certain Kristine Florencio, of Scout de Guia Street, Quezon City.

No Manila dad scored perfect in attendance

BY JEROME ANING

NOT a single councilor posted perfect attendance in the 39 regular sessions of the City Council since July.

Based on the summary of attendances compiled by the Council's Secretariat under lawyer Rodolfo Lapid, three aldermen tied in having the least number of absences.

Councilors Maria Asuncion-Fugoso of the third district, Arlene Koa of the first and Victoriano Melendez of the fourth were absent only three times.

Fugoso chairs the committee on women and family relations while Melendez heads the committee on economic development. Koa is the council's minority whip.

Absent for four times were Councilors Don Ramon Bagatsing of the fourth district, the minority floor leader, and third district's Manuel Zarcal, chair of the committee on international relations.

NO MANILA DAD/ A20

WAZZZZUP?
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

8th day BAR + CAFE ST. FRANCIS SQ. ORTIGAS CTR.	NTWINE	PIDO W/ TAKE 1 JAN 3 ☎ 634.7696/98
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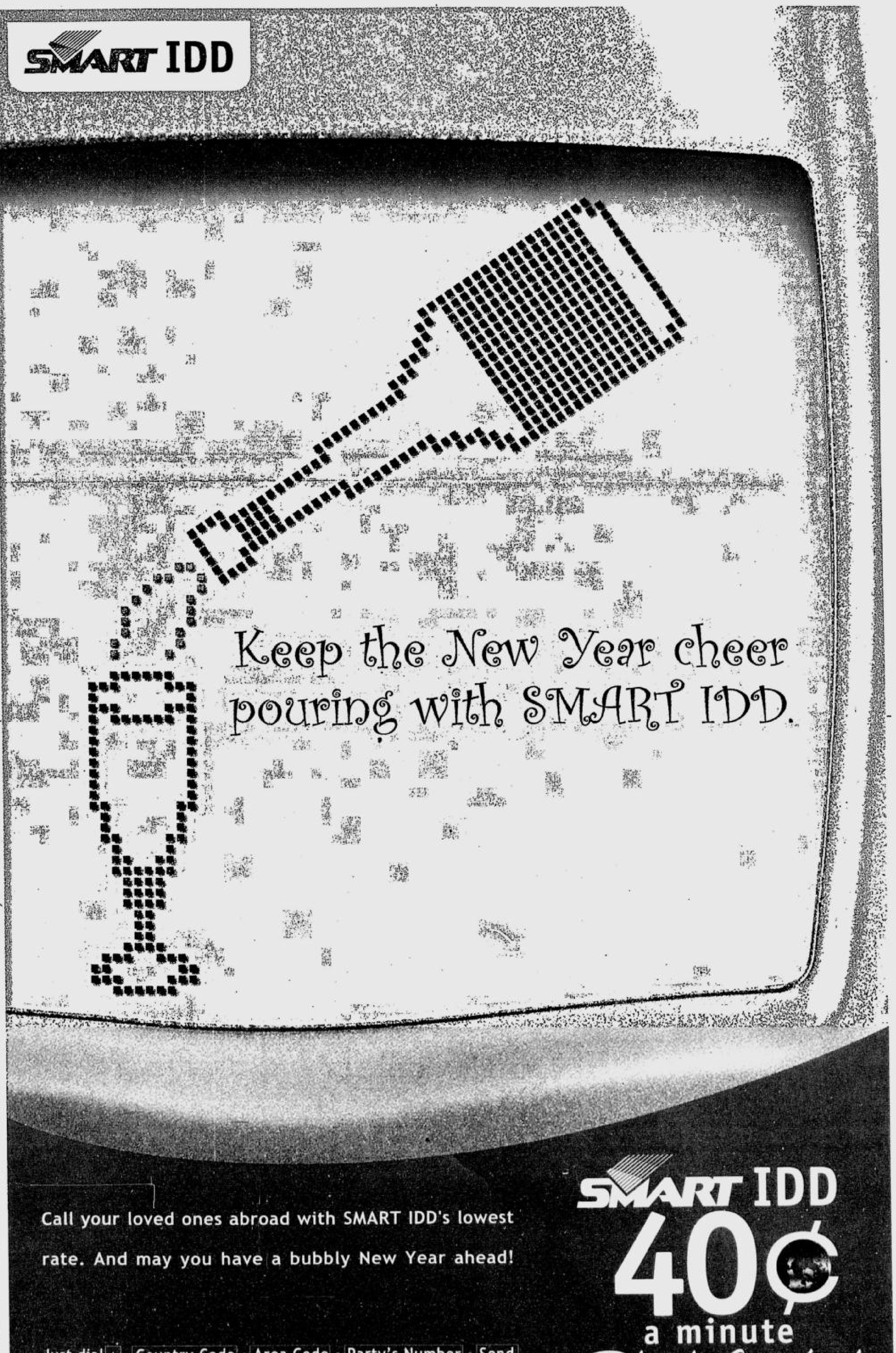
Cowboy Grill BRGY. ALMANZA, LAS PINAS	SERSIDE ICE KENDI	☎ 801.7644
Cowboy Grill 1190 ARQUEZA ST., MALATE	HOMOSAPIENS KNIGHTS/BARRICADE	NO ENTRANCE FEE 525.1474/525.4269
Cowboy Grill 431 REMEDIOS ST., MALATE	GOALKEYS FREEZE	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎ 521.8143
Cowboy Grill NOVALICHES Q.C.	PARTY-Z-POLE ZYNAXIS/HIMIG	☎ 936.9757
TIA MARIA'S JUPITER ST. MAKATI CITY	FLIGHT MYX JAM	☎ 890.4735
TIA MARIA'S REMEDIOS COR. CAROLINA ST.	VERSE 2 SPHAGETTI	☎ 522-0429

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY '02 912-8983



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Not much to show after 30 years of toil and trouble

By Nelson F. Flores

ROLANDO Forte has not much to show after 30 years of driving a passenger jeepney. His life is a constant struggle to feed, shelter and clothe his wife and two daughters.

Forte, 54, said he does not expect his fortune will change in 2002. He said he was born poor and will probably remain one until he dies.

Forte has driven along the Kalentong-Nueve de Febrero route in Mandaluyong City for nearly three decades.

He said he barely earns enough to feed his wife and two daughters and finance his children's schooling. He said he is forced to borrow money from local usurers at cutthroat rates, and now he is deep in debt.

"I have to borrow money otherwise I won't be able to sustain my family especially during times when my earning is not enough, like when it is time to pay the tuition of my eldest who studies at the Jose Rizal University," Forte said.

Forte said there are times when he worked as a mechanic's helper or a family driver to earn extra money.

He added his wife helps by working as a part-time domestic helper in their neighborhood in Bulacan, working for P50 a day. Meanwhile, his eldest daughter works in a popular hamburger chain to augment the family's meager income.

Roland admitted that he sometimes gambles. He said he plays billiards in a local pool hall, or basketball with his friends in the neighborhood, waging on the side and earning an extra buck, if lady luck happened to favor him at the time.

"I'm forced to gamble from time to time," Rolando said in Filipino.

He explained he is not really a gambler, just someone who is forced to play the odds due to circumstances.

Rolando explained the holiday season is just an opportunity to earn extra for the wife and children. He said hitting the road during Christmas Day, and every day thereafter until New Year's, was a sure way to earn extra.

"A bit of ham, cheese, noodles and coffee for *noche buena*, that's OK for my family," Rolando said.

The only thing Forte prays for in his life—aside from attaining a better life, that is—is good health for his family.

He said he cannot afford to send any one of them to the hospital if any one of them gets sick.

"You can't afford to get sick, life is that hard," Forte said as he boarded his jeepney for the daily drudge.

A gift from Erap: Joy and innocence

TODAY is Wednesday, the winter moon on the wane.

There are a good 364 days left in the young year.

If to a great jug of wine, the first gulp of the year's content had yet to be poured.

The vintage is yet to be smelled, tested. We've no idea what's in there.

Nothing therefore could be more heartwarming than this wish from a mathematician who texted me this holiday message:

Wishing u 12 months of happiness, 52 weeks of fun, 365 days of success, 8, 760 hrs of good health, 525,600 mins of blessings, and 3,153,600secs of joy. Whew! Happy New Year. Sender 639192166401.

To all those who remembered us during the holidays, once again: Please accept our sincerest thanks.

Of course, the most touching of the holiday heap came from a most unexpected source: Former President Joseph Estrada.

Erap, an old friend, sent over a bottle of wine, a CD-Ama ng Masa, and a rectangular colored card lush with his wishes in faultless Filipino and signed in his original penmanship.

Considering his fate, I should have been the one sending the man a gift, or even a simple wish, at a time like this—when he badly needs one.

I feel humbled. Allow me, therefore, to send you, sir, my prayers and best wishes.

* * *

You know what? What I did was take Erap's holiday gift to Lipa City where we distributed goodies and a little sum to children of planters and farm hands in a simple, tree-filled neighborhood in Pangao.

I displayed Erap's gift on the dinner table where it was appreciated by friends who came over to help bring joy to the poor kids.

Eraps' gesture, as could be expected, was a big hit. They could not seem to fathom how one imprisoned fellow could find time to care for others when he's definitely being beset by horrible fate.

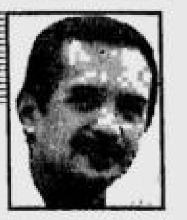
Erap would've been a great hit among the farm kids.

It was, of course, Christ's love which pervaded as we treated the children, numbering a little over 60, to a simple feast before the gift-giving on Dec. 27.

The event was made possible with the help of friends that included Nandy Charvet, Sen. Bobby Jaworski, Ciso Bernardo, Buddy Encarnado, sportsman Lucio Yan, Dr. Ruel Reyes and Jean Cortez of ATR World's Best Wines, local distributor of Miguel Torres vintages from Spain.

Mar Maralit did the cooking with help of neighbors headed by Kuya Narding Martija. Danny Silva sent in a whole lechon, Gerry Mayor bought a whole goat, Mr. and Mrs. Rene del Monte took charge of the table setting and the quiet assembly of the excited children.

BARE EYE



Recah Trinidad

Needless to say, the general feeling among those who joined hands in giving the poor kids a piece of holiday cheer was both of peace and fulfillment.

It's not everyday that you can behold pure joy in the face of poor innocent children.

* * *

Pure joy and innocence.

Deep within, all we've always prayed for in this deadline beating business is to be able to present things in their proper perspective. And, if possible, be an agent of change where change is needed.

There was therefore some alarm when we received the following text message last week:

In Alex's article on Tatarin in Metro, he refers to Summer Solstice as a short novel and Nick Joaquin's epic. Hindi ba n'yo na-check yun?

I was off. Sorry for the oversight.

Anyway, allow me to report that, as in past years, we visited Nick yesterday, New Year's Day, at his residence in San Juan. Contrary to fears, the National Artist for Literature, who generously lent his prize-winning short story Summer Solstice to over-anxious filmmakers, is in great shape. Eyes aglow, cheeks pinkish.

The great writer is still on a regular beer diet.

He offered me brandy but it was too early for cocktails.

Now, I don't know how these next few lines would strike you. It's the opening episode in a second-hand book picked up by this reporter from a weekend market when he visited his mother in California some three years ago.

The book: Anti-Memoirs by Andre Malraux. Here's part of the opening episode entitled

1965, Off Crete:

In 1940, I escaped with the future chaplain of Vercors. We met again shortly afterward in the little town in the Drome where he was parish priest……We talked far into the night, as friends do when they meet again, amid the homely village smells.

"How long have you been hearing confessions?"

"About fifteen years."

"What has confession taught you about men?"

"Oh, confession teaches nothing, you know, because when a priest goes into the confessional he becomes another person—grace and all that. First of all, people are much more unhappy than one thinks….and then…."

He raised his brawny lumberman's arms in the starlit night: "And then, the fundamental fact is that there's no such thing as a grown-up person."

Metro Manila trash piling up on streets

By Christian V. Esguerra

PILES of garbage greeted Metro Manila residents the morning after New Year's Eve, giving the lie to Metro Manila Development Authority's claim that they have beaten the deadline set by President Macapagal-Arroyo to solve the garbage crisis in the metropolis.

On Sunday, garbage czar Benjamin Abalos announced that local governments and the MMDA had beaten the Dec. 30 deadline set by Ms Macapagal to rid Metro Manila of garbage.

Abalos said the volume of garbage had been reduced substantially because of the strict implementation of the waste segregation and recycling system.

But uncollected garbage accumulated on the sidewalks of F.B. Harrison Street, Libertad Street, Rizal Avenue, and the service road of Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City.

Some of the heaps have been in the area even before Christmas. Residents had, in fact, burned some of the trash when local government contractors failed to collect them.

Worse, some of the rubbish, mostly firecracker remains, had been scattered all over the streets.

Baclaran yesterday was more riotous than usual primarily because of the garbage and unruly motorists. Many people trooped to the area to buy New Year presents.

The rest of Parañaque City and other areas in southern Manila were generally clean.

In Caloocan, rubbish, especially those from fruit stalls and other sidewalk booths, nearly swamped the Rizal Avenue Extension fronting Grand Central mall early yesterday morning.

METRO Manila residents yesterday woke up to a metropolis deep in filth. This putrid mass is on 10th Avenue in Caloocan City. VAL HANDUMON

18 fires hit Metro Manila

(From page A19)

Rodriguez said a certain Tomas de la Peña called up the nearby Galas fire station to report the fire.

In another incident, the fifth alarm was raised on Oliveros Drive, Barangay Apolonio Samson after a bungalow owned by a former fireman, Pablo Macabagdal, 57, caught fire.

In Manila, two fires broke out in two boarding houses in Manila while city residents welcomed the New Year before dawn yesterday.

The two blazes damaged Borja Roxas Building on Tolentino corner J. Verlin, Dapitan, in Sampaloc and Chica Boarding House on Padilla Street, Quiapo, arson investigators said.

No one was reported killed or injured in both fires. Arson investigators are also still trying to determine the cause of the fire and the cost of the damage.

Other fires recorded were in Navarette-Arkong Bato, Valenzuela at 10:11 p.m.; Pag-asa-Gagalangin, Tondo, Manila at 11:20 p.m.; Maylupa-Bayani St., Maypajo, Caloocan City at 11:22 p.m.; Sta. Elena-Ayala Bridge, Manila at 12:09 a.m.; Valle Verde-Caimito St., Pasig at 12:12 a.m.; Liwayway Street-Barangay P. Tamo, Tandang Sora, Quezon City at 12:15 a.m.; Pampanga St., Gagalangin, Tondo at 12:17 a.m.; Cataluna in Sampaloc at 12:29 a.m.; Pier 18, Herbosa St. at 12:42 a.m.; Agora Market, Navotas at 12:54 a.m.; Lavisares, Binondo, Manila at 12:55 a.m.; Espeleta-Gandorra, Binondo, Manila at 1:43 a.m.; Saudi Arabia corner Somalia St., Better Living Subdivision, Parañaque, at 7:20 a.m.

Most of the 175 victims reported were brought to Philippine General Hospital, San Lorenzo Hospital, Fatima, Ospital ng Maynila, United Doctors Medical Center, Chinese General Hospital, University of the East-Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital, Makati Medical Center, UST Hospital, Polymedic Hospital, Valenzuela District Hospital, East Avenue Medical Center and Jose Reyes Medical Center. Lita Penaflorida, an official of the MMDA-Metrobase, said the fires were mostly caused by firecrackers lighted by residents during the celebrations of New Year.

In Manila, police were alarmed by a huge explosion that ripped through the front glass wall and door of the Hotel City Garden in Ermita.

But fears of a terrorist attack were dissipated when investigators found out the cause of the blast: sparks from a "bawang" firecracker that landed on half a kilo of assorted pyrotechnics.

The accidental explosion at the Hotel City Garden on Mabini Street in Ermita, Manila left five persons injured and an estimated P5 million worth of property destroyed, said Insp. Alfredo B. Opriasa, of the Western Police District-General Assignment Section.

He identified the injured as hotel employee Carlo J. Gahutan, 31, and security guard Ronnie A. Abaso, 37. The three other injured persons remained unidentified as of yesterday noon.

Besides the shards of glass and twisted metal, police found pieces of assorted firecrackers like Pla-pla, Bawang, and whistle bomb. The hotel was allegedly going to use the firecrackers for its New Year celebrations.

Opriasa said the explosion happened about 10:30 p.m. as metro residents geared up for the midnight festivities.

No Manila dad scored . . .

(From page A19)

Councilor Percival Floirendo tops the list of those with the most number of absences. The city's Sangguniang Kabataan Federation and chair of the committee on youth and sports development was absent 23 times, almost three-fourths of the total number of sessions.

Second district councilors Nelissa Beltran and Danilo Varona, chair of the committee on the environmental protection, ecology preservation and sanitation, followed Floirendo with 21 and 12 absences, respectively.

The Council is composed of 36 elective members—six each from the city's six districts—and two sectoral members: the SK Federation president and the head of the Liga ng mga Barangay.

The body holds session twice a week—on Tuesday and Thursday—for only three hours, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Lapid said there were 45 possible sessions from July to December, but only 39 were actually held, the rest being adjourned due to lack of quorum, bad weather or other special occasions, such as when the President visited Manila.

Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna, the body's presiding officer, told reporters in a recent interview that he initially thought attendance would improve if he convened the sessions in the morning, instead of in the afternoon. He was wrong.

He said the only time the aldermen were all there at the session hall was when they tackled the budget for next year.

But Lacuna, a former councilor himself, said councilors who are absent many times are not necessarily lazy and irresponsible.

He said many councilors are busy attending to the needs of their constituents in their districts, while some had to go on official leave or sick leave.

The vice mayor also pointed out that a councilor's overall performance is more important than posting a perfect attendance.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, January 2, 2002
Week Before Epiphany

1st Reading: **1 Jn 2:22-28**
Gospel: **Jn 1:19-28**

This was the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?" John recognized the truth and did not deny it. He said, "I am not the Messiah."

And they asked him, "Then who are you? Elijah?" He answered, "I am not." They said, "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Tell us who you are, so that we can give some answer to those who sent us. How do you see yourself?" And John said, quoting the prophet Isaiah, *"I am the voice crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord."*

Those who had been sent were Pharisees; so they put a further question to John: "Then why are you baptizing if you are not the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?" John answered, "I baptize you with water, but among you stands one whom you do not know; although he comes after me, I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal."

This happened in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Commentary

The gospels may be seen as a book of all the witnesses to Jesus Christ. St. John presents John the Baptist as a witness, pointing us to Jesus, urging us to prepare a straight way for the Lord. John's graphic image of being unworthy even to untie the sandal of Jesus captures the divine transcendence and mystery of Jesus as well as the familiar Jesus who travels the dusty roads and eats and drinks with us. The purpose of our journey through 2002, with the help of the daily readings, is to make a straight road for God to enter our lives through a deeper daily companionship with Jesus.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (PROPERTY)—Donation of immovable property—Article 749 of the Civil Code provides *inter alia* that "in order that the donation of an immovable may be valid, it must be made in a public document, specifying therein the property donated and the value of the charges which the donee must satisfy." Corollarily, Article 709 of the same Code explicitly states that "the titles of ownership, or other rights over immovable property, which are not duly inscribed or annotated in the Registry of Property shall not prejudice third persons." From the foregoing provisions, it may be inferred that as between the parties to a donation of an immovable property, all that is required is for said donation to be contained in a public document. Registration is not necessary for it to be considered valid and effective. However, in order to bind third persons, the donation must be registered in the Registry of Property (now Registry of Land Titles and Deeds). Although the non-registration of a deed of donation shall not affect its validity, the necessity of registration comes into play when the rights of third persons are affected, as in the case at bar. It is actually the act of registration that operates to convey registered land or affect title thereto. Further, it is an entrenched doctrine in our jurisdiction that registration in a public registry creates constructive notice to the whole world. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Melo, Third Division, Gonzales v. Court of Appeals, G.R. No. 110335, June 18, 2001]

Digest by R.B. Vera

METROBRIEFS

Man spurned goes amuck; 2 dead

TWO women were killed while three others were injured when a husband who was dumped by his wife ran amuck in Quezon City Sunday. Police have yet to identify the two dead women, but they said Mylene Andesa, 22, Imelda Ortega, 20, and one Gina Luis, were injured when Mario Medalla, of Kasunduan Street, Batasan Hills, Quezon City, shot up the jeepney the victims were riding in about 8:30 p.m. Medalla's wife Rosa, of Canlas Street, Barangay Baesa, Quezon City, ironically was not harmed in the shooting. Police said Medalla was deeply hurt when his wife refused to reconcile with him. Witnesses took all the victims to the Quezon City General Hospital, where the two women were pronounced dead about 9 p.m. Rosa said she was willing to stand as a witness against her husband, who escaped the scene right after the shooting.

Agnes Donato

Man stabbed dead over *cara y cruz*

ANTONIO Satorre was stabbed dead in Antipolo City on Sunday just as he was winning in the gambling game *cara y cruz*. Satorre, 44, of Purok Silangan, Barangay Dela Paz, Antipolo City, was accused of cheating by his neighbor, Danilo Santos, which sparked the bloody argument about 11:30 a.m., said SPO1 Romualdo Rabaca, of the Antipolo City police station. Satorre was stabbed several times in front of his shocked friends just outside his house, Rabaca said. Police are now looking for Santos, who fled after the incident.

Nelson Flores

Floater fished out of Pasig

AN UNIDENTIFIED man was fished out of the Pasig River in Manila on Saturday. The victim was described as aged 35-40, medium built, and about 5-foot-3. He was clad in *maong* pants and a white shirt with the printed words "Festival of the Cranes," said SPO1 Diomedes A. Labarda of the Western Police District-homicide section. The man was found floating about 3:30 p.m. in the Pasig River near Muelle Del Banco Nacional and Juan Luna streets in Binondo, Labarda said. The crew of tugboat Banga-Dos saw the body, fished it out of the river and took it to dry land. They then contacted the Philippine Coast Guard. Labarda said the body did not bear any signs of injury.

Philip Tubeza

2 men killed in QC rumble

CESAR Moreno, 35, and Frago Lucino, 23, both of Barangay Bahay Toro, Quezon City were killed while five others were injured when a rumble broke out between two families shortly after they welcomed the New Year. Both men were stabbed dead, police said. Injured were Rogelio Moreno; Bienvinido Moreno; Efren Reyes, 36; Gina Lucina, 29; and Marcelo Sevilla, 36. They were all brought to the Quezon City Hospital for treatment, police said. The rumble took place while the Morenos and Reyeses were having separate drinking sessions about 12:30 a.m. inside a compound in Barangay Bahay Toro. Cesar Moreno reportedly got irritated when Efren Reyes accused him of being a "bad husband" to his wife. The argument that followed soon turned into a full-blown fight involving all members of both families. Frago's cousin Sevilla and Rogelio Moreno were also injured in the melee.

Agnes Donato

THE MAKING OF 'BAGONG BUWAN'

Dreaming of a zone of peace

By Marilou Diaz-Abaya
Contributor

A FIERCE battle between government soldiers and MILF rebels can actually be a "picnic"—but only if they're using blank bullets and pretending to shoot at each other on the set of the film "Bagong Buwan."

Real marines and former MILF rebels need little motivation from the director. They're playing themselves, many of them real refugees reenacting how they ran for their lives, away from the crossfires in Mindanao.

Children, women and the elderly, most of them "wounded," carrying babies and sacks of meager belongings, flee in different directions, all screaming in fear and confusion. Gunship helicopters fly overhead; bullets and mortars explode everywhere.

After a few nerve-wracking minutes of fire-fighting, the director's voice is heard over a loudspeaker, "Cut! Good take."

Abruptly, the war stops. There's an instant ceasefire. "Prayers, then lunch break!" Everyone, including the "dead," rises, cheers and applauds.

It is 12:30 p.m. An Imam, still in his battle costume, chants the call to prayer. After a ritual cleansing of their bodies, by now muddied and "bloodied" with red syrup, the Muslims gather in an improvised tent to perform the Zuhr, the second of five obligatory prayers for the day.

Not far away, under the shade of tamarind trees in Tanay, Rizal, (our substitute set for Maguindanao), Roman Catholics recite the Angelus.

Another group of Christians, led by Cesar Montano, Amy Austria and Caridad Sanchez, all dressed in Muslim attire, say grace before their meal.

Two sets of menus are served: seafood and vegetables for Muslims, chicken or beef for non-Muslims, and plenty of rice and fruits for everyone. No liquor, no pork, no firearms except for prop guns.

The children sense a kind of brotherhood brewing on the set. Nine year-old actor Jiro Manio says, "*Sana, kahit sa* Mindanao, *magkuwentuhan na lang lahat ng mga sundalo at rebelde para wala nang giyera* (I wish soldiers and rebels in Mindanao would just tell each other stories so there would be no war)."

Saving a 'sandok'

The civilian members of the cast have their own stories to tell. Babu Mariam isn't sure about her age. Muslims don't celebrate their birthdays. She thinks she's in her sixties. She remembers all the wars, from the '70s to the present.

"Peace never lasts long enough in Mindanao," she says. "That's why I only finished Grade 3. Schoolhouses get burned and I've been running away from bullets all my life."

Once, while she was cooking lunch for her six grandchildren, bombs fell from the sky and Babu's house was hit. She grabbed her grandchildren and they ran as fast and as far away as they could. Ten kilometers later, Babu Mariam realized that she was still clutching her *sandok* (ladle).

"Never mind," she says, "Allah keeps us alive. He has a plan for us."

Her grandchildren are in their teens now. They're still running away from bullets and constantly moving from one evacuation camp to another.

"Back to work," shouts the associate director. A military convoy is to be ambushed by rebels and precise choreography is required. Based on the actual battle experiences of the soldiers and the rebels, we work out the scene. Sometimes they correct each other's maneuvers. Always, they give expert advice to the director and cameramen.

Who will win

Two thorny issues arise. First, how many soldiers and how many rebels will "die"? After all, neither side wants to be wiped offscreen. I say, "Don't worry, you'll be fairly divided. And those who die today can change costumes and do other roles tomorrow, okay?"

Second, "Who will win the war?" I answer, "No one wins the war."

The production company of nearly 200 people spends the whole afternoon blocking, rehearsing, taking and re-taking, interrupted at 3:30, 6:30 and 7:30 to give time for the Muslims to pray.

It's a laborious procedure which I imagine could be as emotionally intense and as physically exhausting as the real war itself. But adrenaline is high and everyone understands the cinematic objective of the scene as well as the significance of the movie itself.

The Imam says, "At least during shooting, we are treated as equals. Now we have more Christian friends."

It took a couple of months prior to shooting the movie for the production staff, cast and crew to get to know each other as professionals and as friends. Together, they took lessons in Christianity and Islam, history, *tarsilas* for Ronnie Lazaro who plays a datu, Mindanao art, actors workshops, paramedical exercises for Cesar Montano and Amy Austria, military training for Jericho Rosales, Noni Buencamino, Carlo Aquino and other soldiers, and they watched documentaries and TV news coverages of the ongoing hostilities in Mindanao.

And there was plenty of time in between formal sessions to get up close and personal. Christians and Muslims candidly shared their prejudices against each other. They also discussed what they liked best about each other.

Both sides always listened to each other with focused attention and, eventually, with growing compassion.

Someone once told me that "the distance between Manila and Mindanao is only six inches. It's the six inches between our ears. It's ignorance."

Immersion

Obviously, the remedy is education. In my case, it took a year and half of research and immersion in the subject of Mindanao before I developed enough self-confidence to write the screenplay with Ricky Lee and Jun Lana. I was fortunate to have been tutored by two intellectual giants and committed peace workers: Datu-Professor Michael Mastura who is a direct descendant of the hero Sultan Kudarat and who is presently a member of the MILF Peace Panel; and Fr. Eliseo Mercado Jr., OMI, president of the Notre Dame University which hosts a Peace Institute and a specialist in Islam and Arabic studies.

ON THE "MUSLIM" set of "Bagong Buwan": The author and film director gives instructions to lead stars Caridad Sanchez and Cesar Montano.

I was awed by the contrast between the majestic splendor of Mindanao and the unspeakable suffering of thousands of refugees displaced by the war and reduced to subhuman living conditions in iimprovised camps. Deaths and burials, hunger and disease were daily tests of their psychological endurance.

But what struck me most about the Moro refugees, especially the women, was their hospitality in the midst of their ordeals. They would welcome any visitor and offered what they could, even a small glass of drinking water.

They conducted themselves with quiet grace and stoic dignity, virtues which they must have inherited from their ancestors.

In the camps, they took charge of logistics and kept as many people as possible alive. They did most of the work but always found time to sit and talk.

Most of their stories didn't have happy endings, but they were always told with unwavering hope that someday, things would be better.

I feel that their resiliency is anchored on the strength of their faith in the eventual redemption of man. They always tell me "Insh'Allah (By God's will)."

One community

Storytelling in times of hardship sustains the human will to survive. On the set of "Bagong Buwan," it even helps to create a kind of peace zone. In the early evenings, when complicated night-lighting takes at least two hours to set up, staff and cast have time to rest and to savor the fresh air of Tanay, listen to the symphony of crickets, lie back on the cool grass, and breathe as one community, one family contemplating the stories of the day.

This is what the character Jason, played by Jhong Hilario, dreams of—a zone where Christians and Muslims can live together in peace.

An elderly Maranao, a retired rebel of countless wars, says, "There are many kinds of Filipinos. We're different from each other. It wouldn't be a problem if we were all equal."

A soldier wonders aloud, "True. It's simple. But why can't we do it?"

Rebel and soldier do not have the answer.

After a few moments of precious silence, someone starts to sing, followed by another, and another. Stories and songs should be part of the vocabulary for peace negotiations.

It'll take many more films after "Bagong Buwan" to explore the issues of conflict-resolution. In the meantime, there are thousands of civilian refugees of war waiting for food, for shelter, for clothing, for peace—not only on this movie's set but also in Mindanao and in most other parts of the world.

Last scene

The final scene for the day dramatizes a clean-up operation. After the firefight, soldiers and rebels pick up their dead in the safe darkness of night. They've done this before, in real life, but now they're having difficulty perfecting their movements. They're getting carried away by their memories, and crying when they're not supposed to.

We manage to get the scene done after several imperfect takes. It turns out to be more "raw" than I planned, but also more realistic. I call it a wrap.

There's the expected clapping and now a lot of hugging too. Good crying is cathartic. It cleanses the soul.

This year, the holy seasons of Ramadan and Christmas were observed in smooth succession. The Iidul Fitri and the first Misa de Gallo were celebrated at dawn on Dec. 16, simultaneous with the rise of the new moon.

Usually, this moon is difficult to see; sometimes it's not visible at all.

But it was there, and in a few days it emerged as the crescent moon.

(The author, who directed "Bagong Buwan," won awards for her earlier works such as "Muro-Ami," "Jose Rizal," "Karnal," "Moral" and "Brutal.")

Lea drops the singing and utters the 'f' word

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

FIRST, let me share with you a text message I received from **Tita Ethel Ramos** on New Year's eve: "I wish you simple joy that lasts, love that won't end, blessings to share, courage to achieve your dreams and beautiful moments to remember."

If only we could really have all that, we would have few problems and living and loving would be a breeze.

Still and all, Happy New Year to all!

* * *

CAN YOU imagine **Lea Salonga** cursing on stage and saying the "F" word?

Yes, she can, and she will.

In **David Auburn**'s dramatic play "Proof," which Atlantis Productions is staging, the international stage actress will deliver lines of strong language on stage.

As director **Bobby Garcia** warns, "There's nothing wholesome about the play. We're cautioning parents not to bring kids. It's a tightly written dramatic play but there's a lot of strong language."

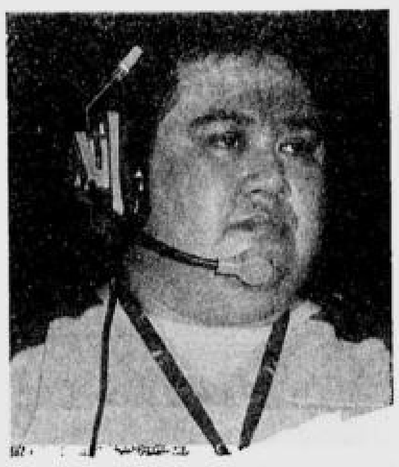
Audiences here and abroad have been used to seeing Lea singing and acting in musicals. She was a demure but passionate Kim in "Miss Saigon," the neurotic lyricist Sonia Walsk in "They're Playing Our Song," the courageous Eponine in "Les Miserables," the wicked witch in "Into the Woods" and a determined Mei-Li in the latest version of "The Flower Drum Song" in Los Angeles.

For the first time, Lea is doing a straight play, with no singing requirements at all.

Bobby and Lea together saw "Proof" on Broadway last June, after which Bobby lost no time in negotiating for the rights to put it up in Manila. "Proof" will run from Jan. 9 to 27, 2002 at the GSIS Theater.

"When she really wants to do something, Lea makes herself affordable for the production," says Bobby. "She was still ironing out the deal for 'Flower Drum Song' when I told her we would do 'Proof.' She was offered an extend run of 'Flower Drum Song,' but she chose to do 'Proof' instead."

"Proof" is a reunion of sorts for Lea and Bobby, who was the resident director of "Miss Saigon" in the last half of its Manila run after **Peter Lawrence** left.



BUENDIA. Concert director and manager of South Border.

"Proof" remains a hot ticket on Broadway after it won a Tony Award and a Pulitzer Prize for best play. It tells the story of Catherine (Lea), daughter of a mathematical genius who is afraid she might have inherited her father's dementia.

"They'll see a different and more mature Lea in this play," Bobby says. "It's not going to be an ingenue performance. If people want to hear her sing, she has a concert on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 at the PICC."

Completing the four-member cast of "Proof" are **Michael de Mesa, Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo** and **Joel Trinidad**.

Michael and Joel were last seen in "Rent." Menchu was Ellen in the last half of the Manila run of "Miss Saigon" and was also in "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe."

"'Proof' is like a mystery," Bobby says. "Each scene is like a part of a puzzle that you have to put together. We've got great actors who have wonderful dynamics onstage. It's very easy to work with them.

"What's nice is that they're all friends with each other so they all get along well."

Dream show

SOUTH Border manager **Cesar Buendia** is happy that the six-member band was able to cap the year with a successful open-air concert at the Philsport (Ultra) track and field arena last Nov. 30, which was watched by 27,000 people.

"It was the biggest production in South Border's eight-year career," Cesar says. "It was a dream for the band to perform in an open-air show.

The band did one at Subic's Remy Field, before a crowd of more than 20,000. That inspired them to do a similar show in Manila."

Although the Ultra show was a lot more expensive to mount than the one in Subic, the South Border itself produced the show through the band's own outfit, SB Pro.

Cesar is the executive director of SB Pro, with South Border drummer **Paul Benitez** as president. The other members of the band are **Butch Victoriano, Luke Mejares, Tata Balane, Ric Junasa** and **Jay Durias.**

The Ultra concert, "The Way We Do," also served to launch the band's latest album.

"They've really come a long way," Cesar notes. "Eight years ago, when I started to manage them, they were just playing in a small night spot called Deja Vu. Now they can fill up major concert venues."

After conquering Ultra, South Border still reaches out to the smaller crowds in such venues as Cowboy Grill and Padi's Mindave (owned by Palanca Award-winning writer **Wilson Lee Flores**).

SALONGA. Stars in a straight play, "Proof."

"I'd like to believe South Border has a solid fan base among the A-B crowd," Cesar says. "We'd like to continue reaching out to the masses."

Bryant endorses sports line on TV

FOR Adidas, there is no player other than Kobe Bryant who can best represent the company in terms of marketing its brand.

Hence, Bryant is seen endorsing the sports line on TV and print ads.

Bryant's exploits alone, both inside and outside the playing court, earned him the adulation of the basketball-loving public and the success of the Kobe Shoe confirmed his marketability as product endorser for Adidas.

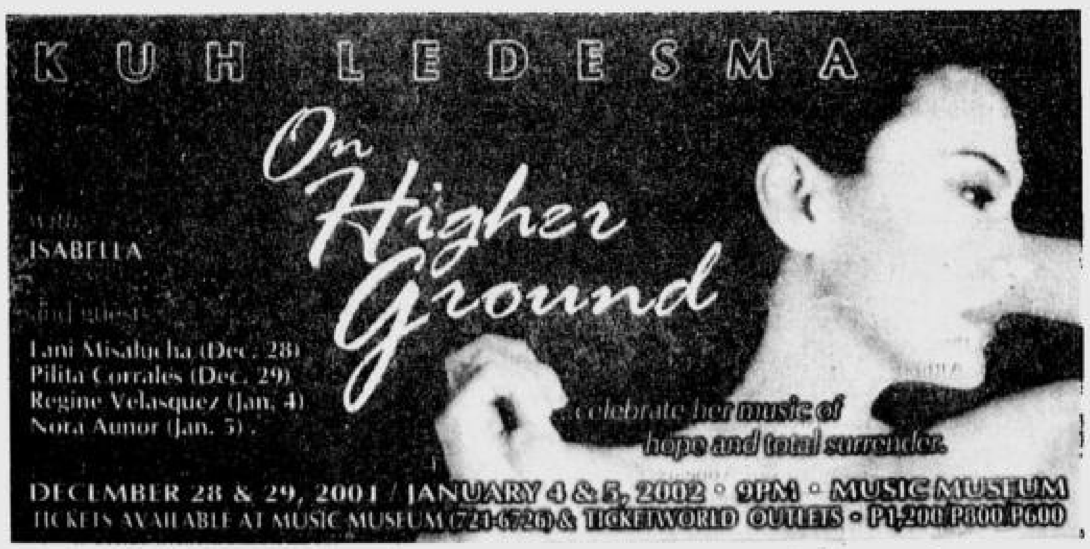
That inspired Adidas to develop a better, more innovative and a wider array of brands in Kobe Two.

"Our partnership with young athletes like Kobe Bryant is Adidas' driving force behind our expanding basketball presence," said Erich Stamminger, part of the Adidas-Salomon marketing team responsible for Adidas' global exposure.

BRYANT

Indeed, the partnership between Adidas and Bryant made the Kobe Shoe a huge hit, selling more than 500,000 pairs worldwide at an average price of $125, the highest in Adidas' basketball footwear history.

This time, the Kobe Two, a collection of Adidas products ranging from jackets, pants, sweatshirts, T-shirts, shorts and headwear, could be what the market has long waited for as a fitting follow-up to the Kobe Shoe.



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according to Associate Justice Raoul V. Victorino of the Sandiganbayan, chairman of the Golden Jubilarian

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4	HINDI KITA MA-REACH	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	SUSMARYOSEPI 4 FATHERS	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	YAMASHITA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	BAHAY NI LOLA (THX)	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	TATARIN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	HUBOG	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	HINDI KITA MA-REACH	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	BAGONG BUWAN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

Art Film

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1	TATARIN	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	BAHAY NI LOLA	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	YAMASHITA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	REGINE AT THE MOVIES DEC. 28, 29, 30 Onstage	

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1	SUSMARYOSEPI 4 FATHERS (THX)	In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	BAGONG BUWAN	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	TATARIN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	HINDI KITA MA-REACH	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	HUBOG	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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7	
8	

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8	4 FATHERS
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(Cubao) tel 911.7888

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3	BAGONG BUWAN

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3 (DTS)	YAMASHITA

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2 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
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4	TATARIN

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4	BAGONG BUWAN

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2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
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3 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
4 (DTS)	YAMASHITA

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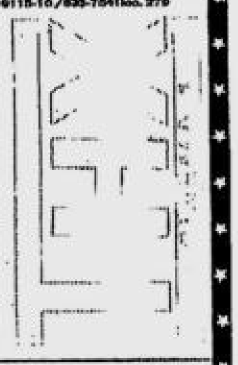
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	HUBOG
10	DI KA MAREACH



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6	SUSMARYOSEP (4 FATHERS)
7	HUBOG

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6	MUSKETEER

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1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	YAMASHITA
3	HUBOG
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	TATARIN
6	ROCKSTAR

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SUTLA (RE-ISSUE)
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	MUSKETEER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	EARTHQUAKE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	MVP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	SUMMER CATCH
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	PISNGI
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	DALAWA SI EBA / HIYAS SA PARAISO
ODEON	BAGONG BUWAN
ODEON-2	YAMASHITA
ROBEN	HUBOG
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	PUKYUTAN / STORY OF US
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	HUBOG
REMAR	BAGONG BUWAN
REMAR-2	YAMASHITA
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	YAMASHITA
B	BAHAY NI LOLA
C	HUBOG
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-2	THE MUSKETEER
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-2	HUBOG
CINEMA-3	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DI KITA MA-REACH
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TATARIN
CINEMA-6	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-7	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-8	HUBOG
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-12	TATARIN
CINEMA-14	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-15	FOUR FATHERS
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	HUBOG
CINEMA-2	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-3	TATARIN
CINEMA-4	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-5	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-6	BAGONG BUWAN
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

Boy talks to Dina, Danica

IT'S A special New Year's presentation in "Private Conversations with Boy Abunda," 11:30 tonight on ABS-CBN, with replays on Thursdays, 9 p.m. on ANC News channel.

Featured guest is the mother and daughter tandem of Dina Bonnevie and Danica Sotto.

Danica tells the audience how it is growing up with a celebrity mother, while Dina opens up her world as a celebrated woman and mother.

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173868

1	TATARIN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	YAMASHITA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	4 FATHERS
8	HUBOG

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	TATARIN
3	YAMASHITA
4	HUBOG
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	4 FATHERS
7	BAGONG BUWAN
8	DI KITA MA-REACH
9	YAMASHITA
10	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	YAMASHITA
2	DI KITA MA-REACH
3	TATARIN
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	HUBOG
8	YAMASHITA
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	TATARIN
11	BAGONG BUWAN
12	4 FATHERS

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	TATARIN
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	HUBOG
7	TATARIN
8	DI KITA MA-REACH
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	BAHAY NI LOLA
11	4 FATHERS
12	YAMASHITA

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	TATARIN
2	4 FATHERS
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	YAMASHITA
5	DI KITA MA-REACH
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	YAMASHITA
8	BAHAY NI LOLA
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	BAHAY NI LOLA
11	TATARIN
12	HUBOG

SM TUTUBAN
2514302

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	YAMASHITA
4	4 FATHERS

dts DIGITAL SOUND · DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	YAMASHITA
5	TATARIN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	4 FATHERS
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	YAMASHITA
10	BAHAY NI LOLA
11	DI KITA MA-REACH
12	BAGONG BUWAN

SM SOUTHMALL
8066088 • 8066782

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	DI KITA MA-REACH
3	YAMASHITA
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	4 FATHERS
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	TATARIN
8	BAGONG BUWAN
9	YAMASHITA
10	HUBOG

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L
8820905

1	HUBOG
2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA

SM CEBU
2313876

1	HARRY POTTER
2	MUSKETEER
3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	ROCKSTAR
6	HUBOG
7	TATARIN

SM ILOILO
3209422

1	HUBOG
2	CLOSED
3	HARRY POTTER
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	CLOSED
8	TATARIN

SM PAMPANGA
7128015

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	TATARIN
3	YAMASHITA
4	4 FATHERS
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM SUCAT
8204975

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	TATARIN
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	YAMASHITA

SM DAVAO

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	HUBOG
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	TATARIN
6	MUSKETEER

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

'Fellowship of the Ring' rules holiday weekend in the US

LOS ANGELES – "The Lord of the Rings" kept cash registers ringing to top the holiday box office during its first week of release, while the boxing ring biopic "Ali" took the Christmas Day title.

The adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring" raked in $47.2 million in its first three-day weekend. From Friday through Christmas Day, it took in $66.1 million and $94 million total since opening Dec. 19.

With the next two installments of the trilogy already shot, part two is scheduled for release around Christmas next year. The last picture should come in 2003.

"We have two more in the can just like this. You don't have to worry. They're there," said David Tuckerman, head of distribution for New Line, which is releasing the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

"The quality of acting is the same, the landscapes are the same. The big difference is there's more action in the next two."

"Ali," starring Will Smith as Muhammad Ali, took in $10.2 million in its Christmas debut. That beat "Patch Adams," which held the previous high for a Christmas opening with $8.1 million.

"Muhammad Ali is probably the most known person around the world," said Jeff Blake, president of worldwide marketing and distribution for Sony, which released "Ali." "And the good news is, everybody's heard of Will Smith. They are a great one-two combination."

Also making its debut on Christmas Day was the Meg Ryan-Hugh Jackman romantic comedy "Kate and Leopold," which grossed $2.6 million.

"The Shipping News," starring Kevin Spacey, opened in limited release with $318,500 in 186 theaters.

Russell Crowe's "A Beautiful Mind," which opened in narrow release Friday, expanded to 524 theaters on Christmas Day. It has grossed $2.5 million.

"Fellowship of the Ring" had the best three-day weekend opening ever in December, beating a mark set just two weeks ago by "Ocean's Eleven," which debuted with $38.1 million.

At three hours, "Lord of the Rings" was limited in the number of screenings theaters could cram in, keeping it from breaking any major box-office records.

"Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," which shattered most major records a month ago, upped its haul by $10.7 million between Friday and Christmas Day. That edged it past "Shrek," making it the year's top-grossing film at $267.8 million and counting.

The top 20 movies at North American theaters Friday through Tuesday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Wednesday by Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. and ACNielsen EDI Inc.

1. "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring," New Line, $66.1 million, 3,359 locations, $19,683 average, $94 million, one week.

2. "Ocean's Eleven," Warner Bros., $21.4 million, 3,075 locations, $6,953 average, $102 million, three weeks.

3. "Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius," Paramount, $18.6 million, 3,139 locations, $5,911 average, $18.6 million, one week.

4. "Vanilla Sky," Paramount, $16.5 million, 2,744 locations, $6,009 average, $49.5 million, two weeks.

5. "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," Warner Bros., $10.7 million, 3,311 locations, $3,246 average, $267.8 million, six weeks.

6. "Ali," Sony, $10.2 million, 2,446 locations, $4,177 average, $10.2 million, one week.

7. "How High," Universal, $9.8 million, 1,266 locations, $7,725 average, $9.8 million, one week.

8. "The Majestic," Warner Bros., $7.4 million, 2,361 locations, $3,120 average, $7.4 million, one week.

9. "Not Another Teen Movie," Sony, $7.2 million, 2,365 locations, $3,025 average, $23.3 million, two weeks.

10. "Monsters, Inc.," Disney, $5.7 million, 2,097 locations, $2,718 average, $226.3 million, eight weeks.

11. "Joe Somebody," Fox, $5.4 million, 2,506 locations, $2,146 average, $5.4 million, one week.

12. "Behind Enemy Lines," Fox, $4.5 million, 1,808 locations, $2,489 average, $45.1 million, four weeks.

13. "Kate and Leopold," Miramax, $2.6 million, 2,449 locations, $1,046 average, $2.6 million, one week.

14. "A Beautiful Mind," Universal, $2.5 million, 524 locations, $4,773 average, $2.5 million, one week.

15. "The Royal Tenenbaums," Disney, $2 million, 40 locations, $49,108, $2.5 million, two weeks.

16. "Spy Game," Universal, $1.2 million, 834 locations, $1,484 average, $59.9 million, five weeks.

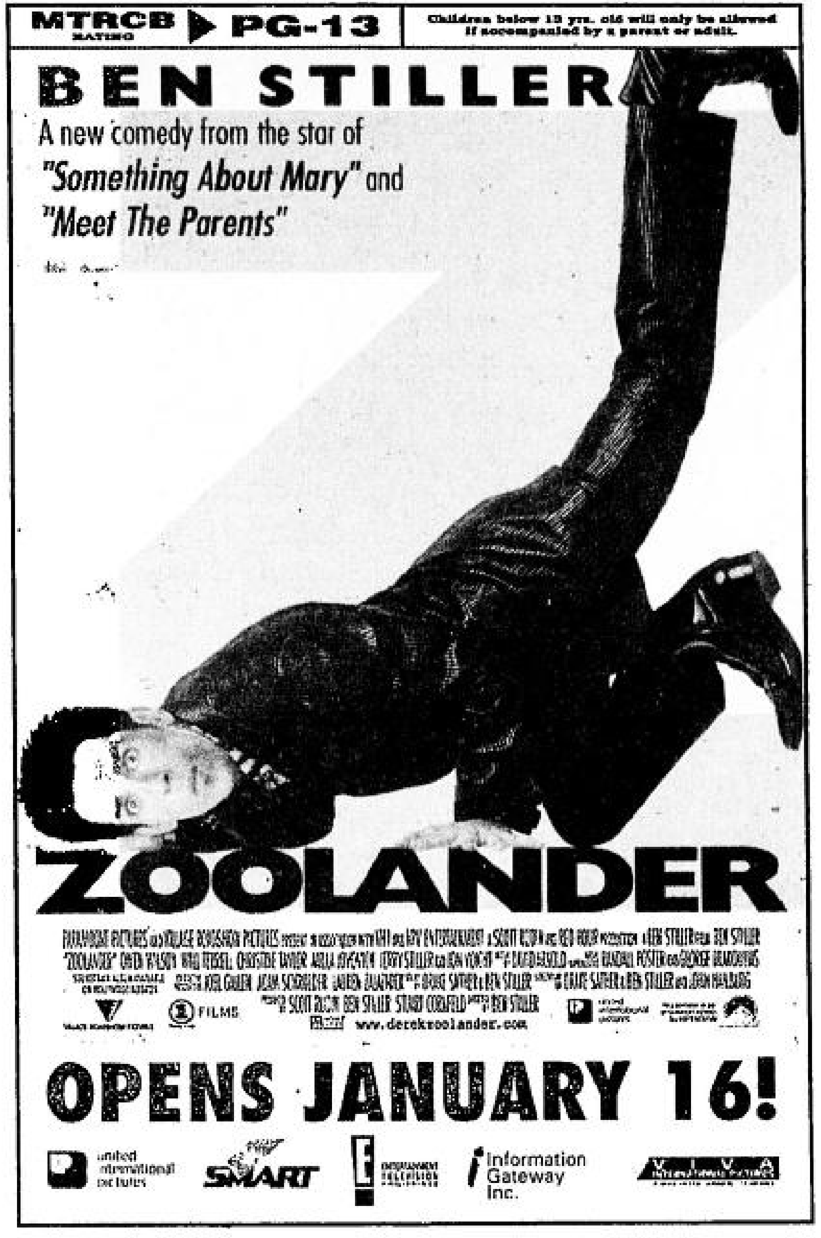
17. "Amelie," Miramax, $1.16 million, 250 locations, $4,624 average, $14.1 million, eight weeks.

18. "Black Knight," Fox, $706,883, 647 locations, $1,093 average, $31 million, five weeks.

19. "Serendipity," Miramax, $463,846, 331 locations, $1,401 average, $50 million, 12 weeks.

20. "Shallow Hal," Fox, $414,745, 549 locations, $755 average, $67.9 million, seven weeks.

AFP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Strong performances in 'Larawan'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE LAST "Larawan" telecast for 2001 (Dec. 27) gave the Channel 7 drama show a big finish for the telecasting year. It cast **Dina Bonnevie** as the mother of her real-life offspring, **Danica** and **Oyo Boy Sotto**.

In the TV drama, Dina brought up her kids on her own as a single parent, since her husband (**Joel Torre**) had made himself scarce for over a decade. As a single mom, Dina had become strict and tough, and Danica resented all the rules that she had to follow.

Dina explained that she had to do this because she wanted to protect her children, since they had no father to do that for them, but Danica wasn't mollified.

In terms of her own happiness, Dina had gotten an annulment and was all set to marry again. Her fianceé was a doctor (played by **Matthew Mendoza**) who loved her and her children, but she got cold feet at the last minute, and called their wedding off.

Admitting that she was paranoid and scared about failing at marriage again, Dina buried herself in her work, and became even more severe with her employees.

To make things worse, her long-lost husband suddenly made a reappearance in her life. Before she could push him out of her life again, he revealed that he was dying of cancer and all he wanted was to spend his last days with the kids he had neglected all these years.

Dina may have become tough, but Joel's plea made her resolve crumble, and she allowed him to live with them. At first, the arrangement worked well for everybody, but Dina later felt that Joel was turning their children against her, and put her foot down.

However, when Joel's condition deteriorated and he was brought to the hospital, she found enough goodness in herself to forgive him or everything he had and hadn't done.

More, she urged him to fight his disease, not so they could become a happy family again, but for the sake of the children. Well, Joel did recover, but Dina ended up—in Matthew's arms.

The episode tended to be rather pat in its development and facile in its denouement, but it was distinguished by some strong performances. In fact, the story's conflict is so close to Dina's own experience that, in some scenes, she looked like she wasn't acting.

An early indication of this complete identification and emotional involvement was the sequence in which Dina berated Danica for refusing to follow her rules. Dina even slapped Danica hard (with Danica's consent, we trust), so the scene flared with real anger and pain.

Some other scenes also benefited from the lead actors' strong identification with the rules they were playing. In fact, when Joel Torre appeared, another viewer at home remarked, "They should have gotten **Vic Sotto** for the role of the long-absent father, *para kumpleto talaga ang* real-life drama!" Well, they didn't—or couldn't—but Joel did well enough in the role.

'Musical Journey of Joey Welz'

ROCK pianist **Joel Welz**, former member of the rock 'n' roll band Bill Haley and the Comets, has released his latest album, "Musical Journey of Joel Welz."

The twin CD has 35 cuts that pay tribute to the legends of rock 'n' roll. Topping the selections are Welz's noted tracks, like "The Yo-Yo Man's Back in Town," "Rock 'n' Roll Car" and "Summertime Blues."

TV treats

ON the National Geographic Channel: Tuesday, Jan. 8 at 6 p.m., "Croc Chronicles." Dr. Barr encounters the cottonmouth, a venomous snake with a vicious reputation.

At 10 p.m., the focus is on Skutsje sailing, a race for survival. Originating in Friesland, it's done on the razor's edge of relentless competition, and winning is taken very seriously. Decisions made in a split second can and do have severe consequences.

The National Geographic Channel is available locally on Destiny Cable and over 300 cable systems nationwide.

Feedback

FROM **Chona R. Pacis** of Makati City: "From the crowds in the theaters during the Metro Manila Film Festival, it's clear that the family-oriented entries are beating the sexy dramas. This is a welcome development because it shows that Filipino moviegoers are finally getting over their fetish for sex and violence.

"If this trend continues, local movies will be better next year, and they will also fare better at the box office.

"With money so tight these days, moviegoers are carefully choosing the movies they see, so quality and production values are more important considerations now. I hope our

New boy band set to invade Manila

THE BOY band fever gets even hotter as the guys get more talented than ever.

From the same man (Trans-Continental's Lou Pearlman) who groomed five-man acts Backstreeet Boys, 'NSync and O-Town into being the hottest teen icons of the new millennium, comes five talented young men who vow to put the music scene back into boy bands by playing their own musical instruments while showcasing their five-part harmonies and dance moves.

They are Ben Bledsoe, J Horn, Michael Johnson, Patrick King Jr. and Marc Terenzi, collectively known as Natural, and they're set to rock the Philippines this February.

Watch out as they invade the country's hottest malls and selected schools in "Natural Live" mall and campus tour, Feb. 5, 6 and 7.

The new fave five have already created quite a buzz abroad with their hit single "Put Your Arms Around Me," which Billboard raves as a "startlingly good pop song, tightly produced and beautifully written and quite a showcase for some utterly glorious harmonies." It has been certified gold in the United States.

Natural, whose members range from 19 to 23 years old, stand apart from other boy bands as they display great instrumental skills, playing the electric guitar, bass, drums, keyboards, violin and the saxophone.

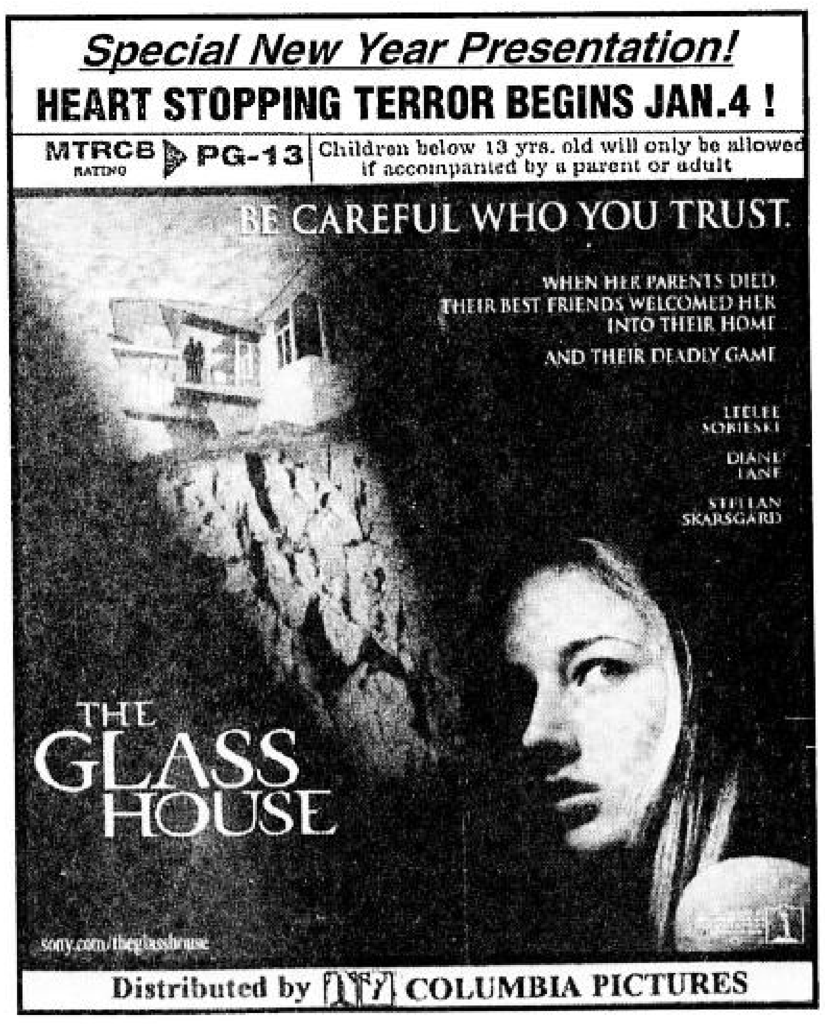
NATURAL. To launch their hit single in the country this month.

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

HUBOG - R 18 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	BAHAY NI LOLA - GP 11:00, 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 7:35, 9:45	TATARIN - R 18 11:00, 1:10, 3:25, 5:40, 7:55, 10:10
YAMASHITA - GP 12:25, 2:45, 5:05, 7:25, 9:45	BAGONG BUWAN - P 13 1:00, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00	BAGONG BUWAN - P 13 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

Matinee, P80, Mon.-Fri., 11:00 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.

AYALA CINEMAS
2 DAYS TO GO
LORD OF THE RINGS. JANUARY 4, 2002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WHEN HER PARENTS DIED THEIR BEST FRIENDS WELCOMED HER INTO THEIR HOME
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DIANE LANE
STELLAN SKARSGARD
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It's not how you play the GAME...
Robert REDFORD
One agent must outwit the entire CIA to save his friend from execution within 24 hours.
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SKYFILMS
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Brad PITT
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- Manuel V. Pangilinan
Chief Executive Officer, PLDT

As we enter a new year, PLDT reaffirms its pledge to improve the quality of life of our countrymen. By creating services that would make each Filipino's life richer and fuller. From expanding our base of more than 8 million subscribers to our landline, cellular, cable, satellite and internet systems. To providing affordable long distance rates to keep families in touch with each other here and around the world. From giving value-added mobile services to the ordinary Filipino. To the installation of satellite-based calling stations, linking remote areas to the rest of the world. And operating a secure and reliable nationwide digital fiber optic network and the biggest internet gateway (155 mbps), firming the country's grip on today's information age. Our initiatives in the year 2001 are proof of our continuing effort to bring these technologies within the grasp of the average Filipino. As we look forward to the year 2002, PLDT pledges anew its commitment to fulfill its mission - to enable people to get in touch, to listen, to be informed, to understand, and to make intelligent choices. Because the future indeed is in each and every Filipino's hands.

PLDT

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BUSINESS

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ▨ CORRIE S. NARISMA, Assistant Editor

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DTI lets Casino, Makro own RP units

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has approved the application of retailing giants Casino Guichard Perrachon of France and the Makro Group of the Netherlands to operate wholly owned units in the Philippines.

In his year-end report, Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the DTI has granted certificates of compliance with pre-qualification requirements to Casino and Makro's Okram Asia Holdings.

Roxas said that the DTI was also in discussions with Wal-Mart Inc. of the United States for pre-qualification, but he provided no details.

Although Roxas declined to elaborate on the plans of Casino and Okram in the Philippines, their application for pre-qualification shows their keen interest in the local retail industry which has been opened to foreign ownership in 1999 after half a century of being limited to Filipinos.

Casino, France's leading convenience store operator, had previously signed a P4-billion deal with Jimmy Gow for its takeover and rehabilitation of the bankrupt Uniwide Holdings Inc. in February 2000. But the worsening political crisis in the fourth quarter of 2000 (highlighted by the Senate impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada) forced the French retailer to abandon its plan and defer its investment in the Philippines until the turbulence is over.

Casino runs 6,900 hypermarkets, supermarkets, convenience stores and restaurants in France, Poland, Latin America, Asia and the United States.

The Makro group is expanding its interest in the Philippines through Okram Asia, a wholly owned firm of Netherland's biggest private company SHV.

Makro has been operating in the Philippines since 1996 through Pilipinas Makro Inc. where it has the biggest share with 38 percent. Its partners are Ayala Land Inc. (22 percent) and SM Investments (30 percent). The Retail Trade Act allows it to gain a controlling interest in its Philippine unit.

The DTI has been tasked to pre-qualify the prospective foreign retailers which, under the qualifications cited under the Retail Law, should be major international companies whose net worth are at least $200 million (P8 billion) or $25 million (P1 billion) for luxury stores; with five branches or franchises overseas (or with one store capitalized at $25 million); and a track record in retailing of at least five years. Also, the applicant should come from a country where Filipino retailers are allowed to operate (reciprocity clause).

Casino and Makro were pre-qualified along with McDonalds Corp., which is keen on firming up its control of its local operations in the country.

Based on the plan it submitted to the DTI, McDonald's, through its holding firm McDonald's Restaurant Operations Inc., will effect the merger of its 40 percent owned subsidiary in the Philippines, Golden Arches Development Corp., and McGeorge Food Industries of George Young, the Philippine franchise holder, with the former as the surviving entity. Golden Arches handles the purchase or lease of McDonald's stores, while McGeorge issues the franchises.

RP expects $5-M ADB loan for PNR rehab

THE ASIAN Development Bank is expected to grant the country $5 million in technical assistance to help rehabilitate the antiquated Philippine National Railways.

Gunther Hecker, ADB country director for the Philippines, said the technical assistance would be used to hire a team of experts to study how to put the century-old PNR back on track.

Hecker said the technical assistance would help in the preparation of the project and in determining what should be done with PNR.

He said the proposed loan package for PNR was supposed to have been approved last year but was deferred to enable the ADB and the Philippine government to resolve certain issues regarding PNR's rehabilitation.

The Department of Transportation and Telecommunications, for its part, is proceeding with its own plan to rehabilitate the PNR by 2006.

Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez said the DOTC was planning to tap the private sector for a possible build-operate-transfer deal.

He said the problem with the PNR was that almost 90 percent of its real estate properties were occupied by informal settlers that the government could not relocate.

"During the past administration, a number of the properties owned by the PNR were given to urban settlers who had occupied some abandoned and unused PNR properties," Alvarez said.

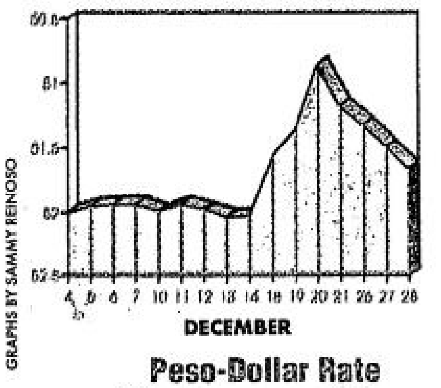
These land distribution exercises, he added, would "pose no hindrance to the rehabilitation work" as these pieces of land were mostly non-core properties.

Those living along the tracks or those who could get hit when expansion and rehabilitation plans finally push through will be relocated. *Doris C. Dumlao and Abigail L. Ho*

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



Peso-Dollar Rate

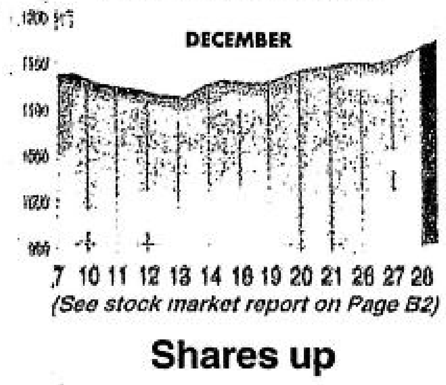
P 51.665 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Dec. 28, 2001

¥ 131.46 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Dec. 28, 2001

GOLD:$277.50/278.00
per ounce Hong Kong,
Dec. 28, 2001

STOCK MARKET

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares up

SHARES ended higher Friday, the last trading day of the year, as portfolio fund managers bid up prices before closing their books for 2001, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed up 15.22 points, or 1.3 percent at 1,168.08, adding to Thursday's 0.6-percent rise.

The market managed to end above its 1,150-point immediate support, though its overall performance for this year proved disappointing, with the main index registering a 22-percent decline from its 2000 closing level of 1,494.50. **AP**

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OUTLAST Xceed
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Stocks off to slow start after long New Year holiday break

By Doris C. Dumlao

MARKET PLAY

AFTER the short-lived rally last week to celebrate the end of 2001, local stock prices are expected to drift when the market reopens today after another long holiday break.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index ended the last trading week of 2001 on an optimistic note, gaining 22.11 points or 1.93 percent week-on-week to close at 1,168.08 on Friday, as investors went bargain-hunting in anticipation of a better year ahead.

Last week's gainers included Globe Telecom, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Union Cement Corp., Belle Corp., JG Summit, Ayala Land Inc., Jollibee Foods Corp., Aboitiz Equity Ventures, SM Prime Holdings Inc., San Miguel Corp. A, La Tondeña Distillers Inc. and Ayala Corp.

BPI Securities technical analyst Roberto Cano estimated the next resistance level for the Phisix would be at 1,185 to 1,200 points.

He said some technical indicators showed that the market might be on its way up but there is some resistance at 1,200 points.

The resistance level indicates that point beyond which investors see stock prices as expensive.

"We still think that the market can still test the 1,200 point resistance level but may find some difficulty trying to break through 1,235 points," he said.

Stock market portal 2tradeasia.com said trading activity was likely to start slow during this three-day trading week as institutional fund managers wait for more positive news, such as a further slowdown in interest rates here and abroad, to support the market.

Since the US Federal meeting would take place on Jan. 30, it said the local bourse was likely to hover within 1,130 and 1,180 points in anticipation of the meeting's results.

"Overall, comparisons are likely to be made between the fourth quarter of 2001 estimated results vis-a-vis forecasts on the first quarter of 2002 corporate performance. Market players are likely to stay receptive to any improvement within this time frame, as long as yields on fixed-income securities stay at single-digit levels," it said.

2tradeasia.com said the investors' willingness to position at the bottom of an expected stock market recovery was buoyed by two key factors.

First was that current share prices have already factored in all the negative news hounding the economy. Second was the growing consensus that a recovery would take shape by second semester of 2002.

"This optimism was also being supported by companies' drive to enhance shareholder return through cost-savings from streamlining measures as well as necessary alliances to fortify their market reach," it said.

Among the issues it recommended for long-term players included Bank of the Philippine Islands, SMC B, SMPH, First Philippine Holdings Corp. and Meralco B.

"Stocks with adequate cash hoard and/or accumulated treasury shares might obtain interest ahead of potential acquisition stories (such as Alaska Milk Corp. and Solid Group Inc.) Issues where government has equity exposure (such as Meralco and Philippine National Construction Co. and Philippine National Bank) might stay within investors' radar screen with privatization measures gaining importance among Asian fiscal authorities," it said.

Web-based investment guide Philstocks.net added that the market would be due for a technical correction in the near term.

"The market has rallied largely due to seasonal and technical factors. There will be concerns that stocks have run ahead of earnings prospects. We need to see fundamental factors such as improving economic conditions and corporate profits to fuel a more sustainable rally," Philstocks.net said.

It said investors were wary of getting overly enthusiastic and would thus want to make sure that prospects were indeed improving before they would make larger investments in stocks.

"Over the medium term, confidence should slowly build itself up. The case for a recovery in the economy and earnings seems to be getting better with every passing day. There is hope that business will benefit from this past year's interest-rate cuts and other expansionary policy actions," it said.

Shell reports strong performance in 2001

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PILIPINAS Shell Petroleum Corp. plans to follow through with a turnaround performance in 2001 partly as a preparation for its initial public offering.

Outgoing Pilipinas Shell country chair Oscar Reyes said in a news briefing last week that the oil giant's performance last year indicated strength while maintaining that an IPO was mainly an issue of correct timing.

Reyes said Pilipinas Shell was continually submitting reports to the Department of Energy on its assessment of conditions affecting the timing of its public offering.

"(Last year) was a challenging one for Shell and the year ahead would continue to be so, but there would be bright spots," he said.

He said Pilipinas Shell's customer-bonding cards brought the firm closer to customers from all segments of the market.

The cards include Shell fleet card, Shell Citibank card, "Pepeng Pasada" (for jeepney drivers) and "Totoy Triple" (for tricycle drivers).

"We have upgraded our forecourt staff for the customer," Reyes added.

He also noted significant gains in fuel management services and closer customer relationship, especially quality accounts.

."We enhanced our distribution network and increased market participation and share in aviation and marine fuels," he said.

As a result, Pilipinas Shell's bottom line improved significantly compared to its poor performance in 2000, when it suffered a net loss of P1.1 billion.

Reyes said one of Pilipinas Shell's thrust this year would be to consolidate gains in its marketing initiative, operational performance program and cost efficiency.

In an earlier interview, Reyes said Pilipinas Shell had always favored its broad public ownership even before the passage of the oil deregulation law, which mandated it to do an IPO.

"As early as the '60s, Shell in the Philippines already had Filipino shareholding participation," he said.

But Reyes noted that based on prevailing economic conditions, it was expected that a public offering at this time would not be successful both in terms of pricing and distribution.

"This may contribute to the further erosion of public confidence in the stock market and the prospects for our economic recovery."

A wrongly timed public listing would (just erode public confidence in the stock market) while an unrealistic IPO price would discourage prospective buyers, he said.

REYES

PAL won't get new flights to South Korea

By Abigail L. Ho

PIONEER flag carrier Philippine Airlines Inc. will not get any of the three to four new entitlements provided under an amended air rights agreement between the Philippines and South Korea, the Air Transportation Office has said.

ATO chief Adelberto Yap told the Inquirer that PAL had been servicing all 13 of the Philippines' weekly South Korea entitlements prior to the air rights agreement.

Yap said the three to four new flights allowed under the amended agreement would be split between two other flag carriers, Cebu Pacific Air and Air Philippines International Corp.

"Cebu Pacific has applied for five slots, while Air Philippines has applied for two. We'll probably be splitting the new entitlements between them," he said.

In a confidential memorandum of understanding between the Philippines and South Korea signed on Nov. 29, a Korean delegation confirmed the designation of Gokongwei-owned Cebu Pacific as the country's second flag carrier.

Yap said Air Philippines' application had yet to be approved by Seoul, but it had already passed the Civil Aviation Board and was now awaiting transmittal by the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Korean government.

To get a designation, an airline must file an application with the CAB.

Upon approval by the board, the application is transferred to the Office of the President, which will then endorse this to the DFA for transmittal to the country where an airline is asking for designation.

In a related development, Yap disclosed that PAL submitted a position paper with the CAB opposing the move to increase the weekly flight frequencies to South Korea.

He said the airline owned by beer and tobacco magnate Lucio Tan used to enjoy a monopoly of the very lucrative Korean route before the two other local airlines got their designations as flag carriers.

Although PAL had no pending application for additional frequencies, Yap said granting the two other flag carriers rights to fly to South Korea would give the pioneer flag carrier some competition.

"What PAL did when it was still the only one flying to Korea was to go into interline agreements with foreign airlines when it could not service all of its 13 entitlements. With other carriers present, passengers would have a choice to fly with other airlines," he said.

An interline agreement takes place when a certain airline has too few people on board an aircraft to make a particular flight profitable. This airline will talk to another carrier flying the same route on the same schedule to carry its few passengers.

Revenue sharing arrangement is usually a certain percentage of ticket prices going to the original carrier. Unlike code sharing agreements that are formal and on paper, interline agreements are informal, "as the need arises" arrangements.

The addition of two other local carriers plying the Korea route would eat into PAL's revenues, Yap said.

NZ firm sets plantation project

NEW Zealand's Shannalyne Inc. is set to undertake a forest plantation project in Agusan del Sur that may generate some $80 million in timber exports earnings for the Philippines.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources last week disclosed that this forest plantation project would cover some 659,000 hectares of forestlands in the so-called Caraga Region.

The region comprises the Surigao and Agusan provinces.

"A possible joint venture by another local firm with the New Zealand firm, Shannalyne, could be drawn. As of now, the government will take the lead to encourage private sector investments," Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez said in a news conference.

The forest plantation will host a separate timber production line. The Philippines currently imports and process timber as pieces of furniture. The country's yearly importation costs some $60 million.

Former finance secretary takes helm of scandal-tainted exchange

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has asked the Philippine Stock Exchange's new president, former Finance Secretary Ernest Leung, to ensure that the full demutualization of the local bourse and other key reforms are carried out.

Leung will begin today his new job of steering a scandal-tainted and slumping stock exchange.

In a letter, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista asked Leung to share the SEC's concern in seeing to it that the PSE would abide by the letter and spirit of the Securities Regulation Code.

The law requires the stock exchange to be demutualized. It bars any single industry group from controlling or owning more than 20 percent of the bourse.

Bautista specifically asked Leung to ensure that non-broker shareholders would eventually take the helm of the stock exchange to erase its image as an "Old Boys" club and recover from controversies that had dragged its credibility to an all-time low.

The SEC has been pressuring brokers to sell their shares to institutional investors to bring down their ownership of the stock exchange to the mandated 20-percent maximum requirement.

Bautista stressed that the Securities Regulation Code sought a change in the corporate structure of the PSE in requiring that at least 51 percent of the bourse's board should be independent non-brokers, and that the remaining brokers in the board should be represented according to their value of trade.

"Without such divestment and full compliance with the new corporate governance structure, we shall continue to have an exchange that may not meet the objectives of demutualization as intended by the (Securities Regulation Code)," Bautista warned.

The PSE board is technically controlled by eight non-brokers, but it has remained largely under the strong influence of brokers because most of its directors are also members of management committees.

In her letter, Bautista also asked Leung for cooperation in the implementation this year of a "Code of Good Corporate Governance" to which publicly listed companies would have to comply with.

LEUNG

"Two widely quoted international opinion surveys have demonstrated that many shareholders place a premium on good corporate governance, and that stocks of companies that demonstrate good corporate governance significantly outpace those that do not," Bautista said. *Elena R. Torrijos*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, December 28, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.5	5.5	4.8	5.4	25,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57.5	57.5	57	57.5	446,700
China Banking Corp.	560	590	560	590	1,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25	25.5	24.5	24.5	675,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	193	205	192	205	266,520
Philippine National Bank	67.5	67.5	67	67.5	142,000
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	30	28.5	30	26,700
Security Bank Corp.	17	17.25	16.75	17.25	77,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	16	16.25	15.5	15.5	65,200
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.04	1.04	40,000
First Abacus Financial	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	160,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1250	1250	1250	1250	10
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1060	1060	1040	1050	6,430
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24	24	24	24	22,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4.8	6.2	4.8	6.1	43,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.38	2,970,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	650	680	650	680	1,327,140
Ipeople Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	20,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	30,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.5	99,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	417.5	420	417.5	417.5	27,790
Ivantage Corp.	0.45	0.5	0.45	0.5	40,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	24,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	22.75	23	22.75	22.75	7,300
Manila Electric Co. B	30	30	29.5	29.5	614,100
Petron Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.44	1.44	4,609,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	1	0.95	1	380,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.1	1.1	0.97	1.1	105,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.16	2.16	2.1	2.1	3,005,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.6	1.62	1.6	1.62	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	130,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.46	1.5	1.46	1.5	55,000
Union Cement Corp.	1	1	0.93	0.96	660,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	610,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12	12.25	12	12.25	517,200
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	40,500
RFM Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.26	2.28	1,666,000
San Miguel Corp. A	42.5	43	42.5	43	8,300
San Miguel Corp. B	52.5	53	52.5	52.5	1,076,900
Universal Robina Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	2,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.38	260,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	1,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	60,000
Ayala Corp.	4.65	4.7	4.6	4.7	3,671,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	100,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	1,200
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.78	0.78	530,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	34,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.9	2.1	1.9	2.1	41,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	11	10.25	11	26,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.63	0.6	0.6	15,020,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	3,370,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.86	0.86	0.8	0.8	900,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	1,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26	26	25.5	25.5	34,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	500,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	70,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	34,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.7	0.71	0.7	0.71	4,270,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	21,890,000
Music Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	3,830,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	2,400,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	300,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.6	25,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	250,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	150,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Federal Chemicals Inc.	6.8	7.2	6.8	7.2	50,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	10,000
Matsushita Elec. Phil. Corp	5.40	5.8	5.4	5.8	6,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.7	250,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.08	0.1	0.08	0.1	3,000,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14	14	14	62,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.54	0.56	0.54	0.56	63,940,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.48	0.51	100,000
Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.	23	25.5	23	25.5	210,400
Manila Jockey Club	10	10	10	10	22,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.13	0.2	0.13	0.2	900,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	400,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.-Pref	10	10	10	10	600
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.84	1.86	1.74	1.74	312,000
Globe Tel. A - Warrants	460	480	460	480	660
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	620	670	620	670	17,350
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	15	15	10	10	500
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.005	0.005	0.0048	0.005	39,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	9.5	10.25	9	10.25	1,010,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.85	4.9	4.85	4.85	3,617,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	250,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	360,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.2	0.215	0.2	0.215	1,100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	3,010,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.23	0.235	0.23	0.23	4,030,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	5,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.66	1.66	12,334,000
City & Land Developers	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	18,000
SM Development Corp.	0.9	1	0.9	1	3,360,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6,241,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	2,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	3	3.1	2.9	3.1	97,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	7,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	57,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	1,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	220,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	2,800,000
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	21,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	75,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.22	0.25	0.22	0.25	20,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,954,260	115,734,915.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	244,573,840	1,130,497,130.00
PRO	34,325,000	83,406,150.00
Mining	68,917,000	793,900.00
OIL	100,820,000	814,400.00
GRAND TOTALS:	450,591,100	1,331,048,375.00

AVERAGES

Banks & Fin Svc	505.02	UP 6.20
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,579.39	UP 21.50
PRO	501.30	DOWN 0.81
Mining	1,011.29	UP 2.79
OIL	1.93	DOWN 0.03
All Shares Index	682.87	DOWN 0.51
Composite	1,168.08	UP 15.22

NO. OF ADVANCES: 50; NO. OF DECLINES: 30; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 37;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 117; NO. OF TRADES: 2,487

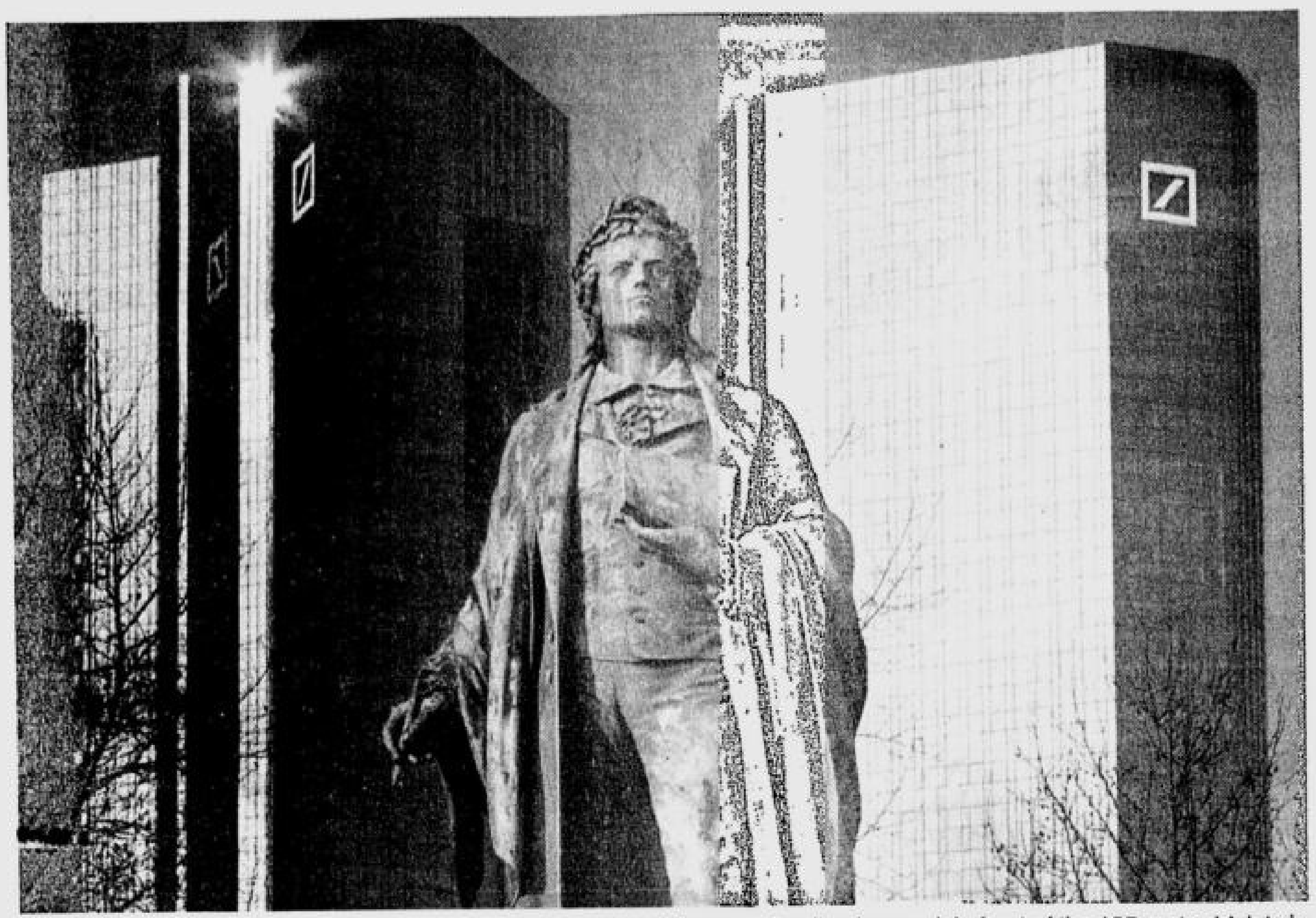
CURRENCIES

Dec, 28, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.132375	1.000000	51.4040
Japan	Yen	0.008600	0.007595	0.3904
United Kingdom	Pound	1.645793	1.453400	74.7106
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.145228	0.128251	6.5926
Switzerland	Franc	0.674474	0.595628	30.6177
Canada	Dollar	0.709019	0.626135	32.1858
Singapore	Dollar	0.610939	0.539520	27.7335
Australia	Dollar	0.574226	0.507099	26.0669
Bahrain	Dinar	3.003806	2.652661	136.3574
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.301959	0.266660	13.7074
Brunei	Dollar	0.610939	0.539520	27.7335
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000109	0.000096	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.025596	0.022604	1.1619
UAE	Dirham	0.308381	0.272331	13.9989
Korea	Won	0.000858	0.000758	0.0390
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.883100	45.3949
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.451522	23.2100
France	Franc	0.152450	0.134628	6.9204
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.400733	20.5993
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.064177	3.2990
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.021891	1.1253
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000456	0.0234
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.148527	7.6349
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004405	0.2264
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005308	0.2729
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.021891	1.1253
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.121306	57.6396

AFTER WAR AND RECESSION

US economy seen on surer footing in 2002



A STATUE of German poet Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805) is seen standing in a park in front of the 155-meter-high twin towers of the headquarters of Deutsche Bank AG in Frankfurt, Germany. Germany's largest bank is cutting 2,100 jobs in its corporate and investment banking division. The layoffs come on top of 7,100 already announced at the bank last year. AP

NEW YORK—After a year marred by war and recession, evidence mounted that the US economy was poised to rebound in 2002, as US consumer confidence posted its biggest rise in nearly four years, home sales surged and the pace of job losses stabilized.

The Conference Board's closely watched consumer confidence index rose for the first time in six months in December, surging to 93.7, and November's reading was revised up to 84.9 from a seven-year low of 82.2.

After waves of job losses pounded consumer confidence for months, economists said Americans' spirits were lifted by a fourth quarter stock market rally, falling energy prices, progress in the war in Afghanistan and signs the labor market had weathered the worst of the slump.

"People are pretty optimistic about recovery. When people are optimistic about a recovery, a recovery is more likely," said Bill Dudley, chief economist at Goldman, Sachs & Co.

Economists closely track consumer confidence as a gauge of future spending, which drives two-thirds of US economic activity. The December surge should come as a relief to US retailers, who, with the exception of large discounters, have suffered through a sluggish holiday sales season.

A separate report showed that the US residential real estate sector continued to defy recession in November as homebuyers snapped up new houses at the fastest pace since March.

The Commerce Department said new homes sales rose 6.4 percent in November to a seasonally adjusted 934,000 annual rate, far stronger than an 888,000 annual rate forecast by economists.

The National Association of Realtors said sales of existing homes rose 0.6 percent to a 5.21-million annual rate in November.

Unseasonably warm weather helped keep housing activity brisk in November, but the entire sector had been remarkably robust as the Federal Reserve's aggressive interest rate cuts last year kept mortgage rates low.

A Labor Department report showed that the job market remained weak but that conditions might be stabilizing.

The number of Americans lining up to file for first-time unemployment benefits climbed by 7,000 to 392,000 during the week ended Dec. 22 after falling for three straight weeks.

But the rise was not as bleak as the 401,000 claims forecast by economists, and the four-week moving average, which smoothes out weekly volatility, fell for a third week in a row to 413,250 from 438,500 in the Dec. 15 week.

That marked a steady improvement from the shock of the Sept. 11 attacks, when claims rose above 500,000 a week in October.

"Labor market conditions seem to be not necessarily improving, but the rate of decay seems to be slowing," said Steve Ricchiuto, chief economist at ABN Amro in New York.

Economists say that the jobless rate should keep on rising through much of 2002 even once the economy returns to growth.

Goldman's Dudley said the unemployment rate would likely top 6.5 percent next year, compared with a current six-year high of 5.7 percent.

"We are going to have a recovery no later than the spring, and possibly sooner," Dudley said. "But we think the recovery won't be as strong as some people think, so the jobless rate will gradually drift up."

The Commerce Department reported that orders for big-ticket manufactured goods fell in November but gave back only part of October's huge defense-related gain, while demand for goods outside of the aircraft sector remained robust. *Reuters*

Weak yen to hurt neighbors–China

BEIJING—Leading state economists in China said Tokyo's tacit approval of the yen's depreciation could further drive down the currency's exchange rate and trigger a new round of competitive devaluation in Asia, state media reported Saturday.

"A softening yen will undermine the hard-won economic stability in Asia," Zhao Jinping, a senior research fellow at the Development Research Center—a think tank under China's Cabinet, the State Council—was quoted by China Daily as saying.

"The continued fall of the yen will definitely put increasing pressure on other currencies in Asia," Zhao said.

It is common for the Chinese government to let academics, who are heavily connected to the government, reflect their views in state-run media.

The report said the Japanese government appeared to want to use the sliding yen to expand exports and offset weak domestic demand, while rising prices on imports would help overcome Japan's chronic deflation.

But these gains would be at the expense of Japan's Asian neighbors, including China, Jiang Ruiping, a professor at Beijing's Foreign Affairs College, said in the report.

Asian economies are "very susceptible" to a falling yen, he said.

Competitive devaluation was a possible scenario if the yen further weakened, he was quoted as saying, adding that "the Japanese government's nonchalant attitude to the yen's free fall will only reinforce its image as an irresponsible country."

Zhang Shuying, an academic at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said a soft yen was not the cure for Japan's economic problems the government was hoping for.

Structural problems were the underlying reasons for Japan's economic recession, he said.

The yen has tumbled by nearly 15 percent since September and in the past two weeks, it has lost more than 4 percent as investors, disappointed at the worsening Japanese economy, have continued selling the currency against the dollar.

Tokyo has not tried to stem the decline, and Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Heizo Takenaka said Thursday the level of the yen was in line with economic fundamentals. *AFP*

Opec speaks of a 'probable' increase in output in 2nd half

CAIRO—Opec expects oil demand to go up in the second half of the year and, therefore, "a probable increase" in oil supply, the cartel's president and Algeria's energy minister, Chakib Khelil, said here on Saturday.

"During the second half, we think there will be an increase in demand with an upturn of the global economy; there is no doubt there will be an upturn in the US economy," Khelil told journalists.

"Therefore, there will be a much higher demand on crude oil, stronger prices and probably an increased supply from Opec and non-Opec countries," he added.

For the first half, he said price would go up during the first quarter because of the winter season in the United States, and come down in the second quarter.

He, however, maintained that it would be "realistic" to expect a $22 price for the barrel as an average for the first half of 2002.

Khelil said Opec's decision on Friday to cut its production by 1.5 million barrels per day in the first half "has already had a quite reasonable impact with the price of the barrel around $20.60." *AFP*

We are pleased to announce that raffle numbers of qualified HOPE depositors corresponding to their average daily cleared balances (ADCB's) for the months of October and November 2001 are now available for verification at their respective branches.

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Foreigners dominate Japanese stocks

TOKYO—In a sign of growing foreign influence in Japan's economy, overseas investors accounted for more than 50 percent of trading on the nation's main stock markets in 2001 for the first time, a major financial newspaper reported Saturday.

The amount of foreign investment in the Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya bourses jumped dramatically this year, with the non-Japanese stock trading share at 52 percent in mid-December—up from a peak of 42.4 percent in 2000, the Nihon Keizai newspaper said.

That sends a clear signal that foreigners, who have long bridled at strict regulations that keep Japan's markets closed, are exerting more control not only over share prices but also on corporate management, the newspaper said.

In recent years, Japan has been implementing a financial deregulation program that makes it easier for foreign companies to gain a foothold. And overseas businesses have been aggressively taking control of wounded Japanese industries.

French carmaker Renault in 1999 bought a controlling stake in Japan's Nissan Motor Co. and restructured it back to health. Several US and European investment firms have been picking up the pieces of defunct Japanese financial institutions.

Some of the biggest players in Japan's stock markets are domestic pension funds and investment trusts. But their influence is not enough to counterbalance the effect of corporations dumping shares they hold in each other—a practice called cross-shareholding—as the economic downturn deepens, the Nihon Keizai said.

That has caused Japan's bourses to increasingly turn to foreign investors to supply the cash needed for business growth, the newspaper said. AP

Oracle plans to fire up to 2% of its worldwide workforce

SAN FRANCISCO—Coming off its toughest quarter in a decade, business software giant Oracle Corp. said it would fire up to 850 employees, or 2 percent of its worldwide workforce, early next year to help offset sluggish sales.

The layoffs will be concentrated in the Oracle's North American consulting arm, as well as its divisions that sell software to the government, education and health care markets, according to a company statement.

Redwood Shores-based Oracle estimated that one to 2 percent of its 42,433 employees would lose their jobs in the streamlining.

Oracle saw an opportunity to shed workers after the recent resignation of longtime executive, Jay Nussbaum, according to company sources.

With Nussbaum's departure, Oracle divided his responsibilities among several other executives who already oversaw their own sales forces. The move means many sales representatives are essentially doing the same jobs.

Like most Silicon Valley companies, Oracle has been hard hit by corporate budget cuts that have curtailed spending on technology products. Unlike many other high-tech companies, Oracle has remained profitable throughout the downturn, although its earnings have slumped from the dot-com boom of the late 1990s.

In its last quarter ended Nov. 30, Oracle's profit fell 12 percent to $549.5 million. Oracle CEO Larry Ellison described the three-month period as the company's most difficult since the early 1990s.

The earnings erosion would have been even worse, if not for Oracle's rigorous cost controls. The company pruned its expenses in the last quarter by 10 percent to $1.54 billion. Over the course of this year, Oracle jettisoned 865 jobs, mostly through attrition, from its peak payroll of 43,308 workers in February.

In a conference call earlier this month, Oracle executives said the worst of the tech downturn appeared to be over, but offered little hope for an upturn until the second half of 2002. The company expects to earn 10 cents per share in the quarter ending Feb. 28, unchanged from the prior year.

With demand slowing for Oracle's software, investors have retreated from the company's stock. Oracle's shares rose 7 cents to close at $14.06 Friday on the Nasdaq Stock Exchange Friday. The stock has fallen by 52 percent this year, shaving Ellison's personal fortune by $20.7 billion. *AP*

Siemens wins $385-M contract for Bangkok subway system

BANGKOK—Bangkok transit authorities have awarded German firm Siemens a contract worth at least 17 billion baht ($385 million) for trains to be used in a new subway system, a report said Saturday.

Bangkok Metro Co. Ltd. (BMCL) reportedly inked the deal with Siemens before the Christmas holiday last week, turning away bidders including Alstom of France and Bombardier of Canada, according to the Bangkok Post.

Siemens was given the contract because it was committed to helping find financial backing for the subway, which is expected to begin operation in late 2003, the report said, quoting a BMCL source.

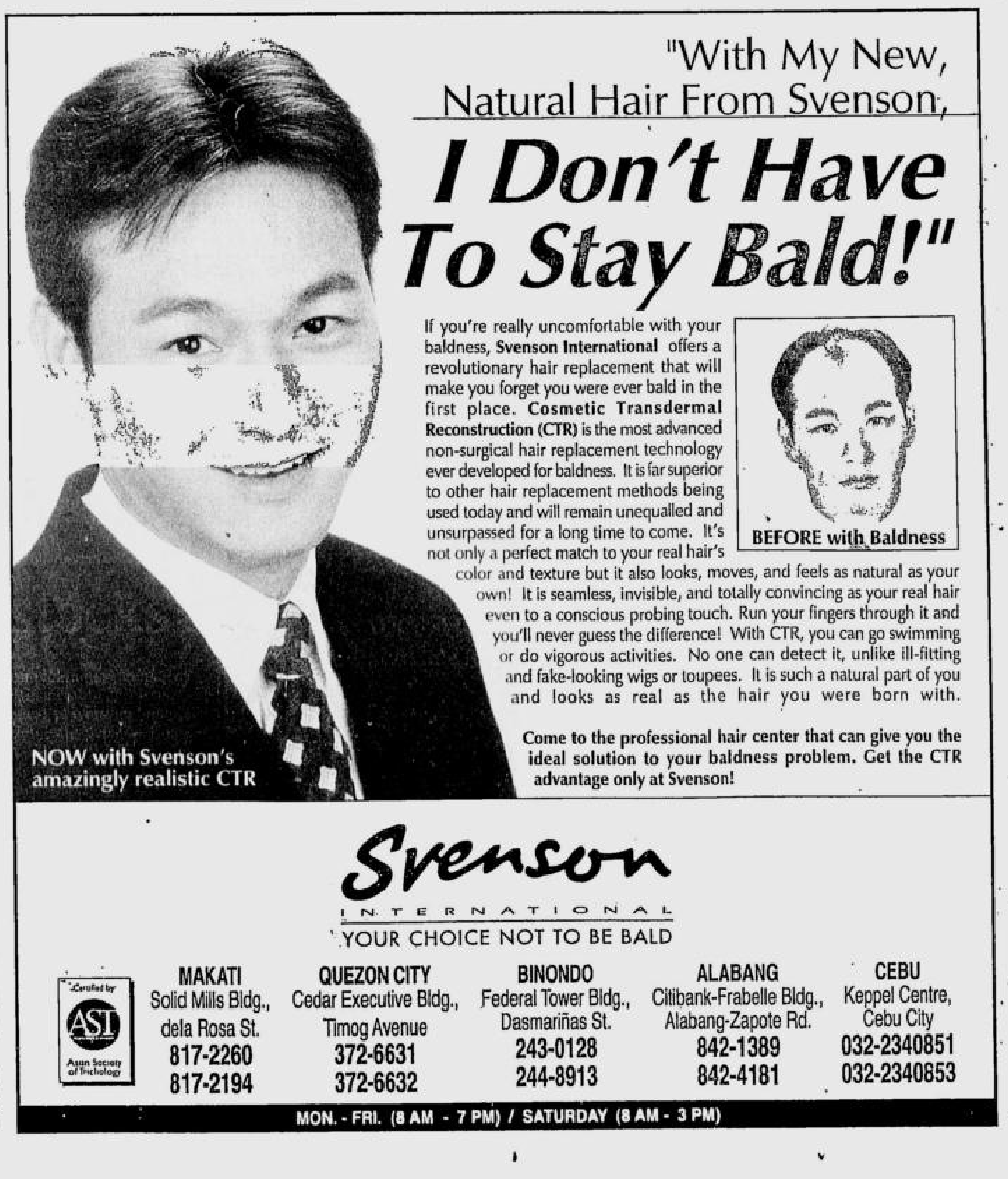
Alstom had been considered the sure-fire winner as the company had earlier signed a pact with the BMCL for trains and hardware, but negotiations with the French firm had reportedly failed.

BMCL first called for bids from four suppliers for the project in 2000, with Siemens initially placing the highest amount at 26 billion baht ($588 million), the report added.

The delivery of the subway trains was expected to take 18 months, with another six months for system testing, the Post quoted Mass Rapid Transit Authority (MRTA) governor Prapat Chongsanguan as saying.

The MRTA had planned to launch the subway's northern line in the Thai capital in December 2002, but have said the launch of the mass transit system would likely be delayed until late 2003.

The subway would be Thailand's second mass transit system after the debt-burdened Skytrain, which began operation in 1999 to help alleviate the Thai capital's notorious traffic congestion *AFP*



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peacefully passed away in our Lord's Grace on 01 January 2002.

Her bereaved parents **TONY** and **MARINA ABAD**; sisters **ADA**, **RICA** and husband **EDGAR BILAN**; their children **Katie** and **Vincent Bilan**;

Her loving uncles/aunts, cousins, nephews/nieces, relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Resurrection Chapel, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (near Claret School), U.P. Village, Quezon City.

Cremation in Loyola (Marikina) will follow after the 2:00 PM Mass on Friday, 04 January 2002.

Please omit flowers, Donations to the **MARA ABAD FOUNDATION FOR KIDNEY PATIENTS** will be appreciated.

HECTOR B. BAYABORDA

of Nasugbu, Batangas and First BF Homes, Almanza, Las Piñas

Has serenely joined the Lord in his kingdom on December 30, 2001 at the age of 63.

His bereaved wife **Corazon**; his children **H. Noel** and **Connie, Homer** and wife, **Hilda** and **Emer, Hans** and **Chinkee**; grandchildren, sisters **Noemi B. Bicbic, Paz B. Ereno**; brothers-in-law **Tony, Don, Conrado, Jose Victor**; sisters-in-law **Mercy** and **Betty**; mother-in-law **Clarita**; his nephews and nieces request the kind reader to please pray for his eternal rest.

His body lies in state at Holy Family Church at First BF Homes, Almanza, Las Piñas.

Funeral Mass will be on Saturday, January 5, 2002 at Holy Family Church at 10:00 AM.

Interment will immediately follow.

Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and where I am, my servant also will be.

John 12:16

People, Events & Products

Aries B. Espinosa, Editor

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Coffee lovers raise cups to Citibank promotion

YOUNG professionals are discovering an exciting new treat that makes their college break an even richer experience. Whether for business or for pleasure, they flock to Starbucks to get a bigger, better boost of their favorite coffee blends simply by presenting the hip new credit card, the Citibank Clear MasterCard.

Citibank Clear cardholders and other aspiring young professionals are taken on by Starbucks' Upsize promo, which automatically upgrades the size of whatever coffee concoction they order using their Citibank Clear MasterCard.

"I was quite surprised actually, when I went to my fave Starbucks outlet, ordered a few cups of coffee for my pals, and got bigger sizes for each when I pulled out my Citibank Clear MasterCard," smiles Jeffrey, 25, a marketing assistant who became a cardholder over a month ago. "I thought Starbucks had given me a present since it was actually my birthday. The Grande coffee sizes that I got sure put a smile on all our faces."

Jeffrey's friend, Gio, learned about the promo and immediately decided to get a Citibank Clear MasterCard. "I heard about this new translucent card from Citibank and when I saw it, I though it looked really cool. Then when I learned about the promotion with Starbucks, I just had to get one."

The Citibank Clear MasterCard-Starbucks Upsize promo has proven to be even advantageous for business, as Marie, a 28-year-old sales executive, has found. "I frequently go out with clients for business lunches and dinner meetings," she explains. "Making a favorable impression is a must in my line of business, and ever since I got my Citibank Clear MasterCard, I never hesitate to invite clients to Starbucks for a round of coffee, my treat. Giving them a bigger size than the one they ordered does wonders."

This upsize offer is automatically given to cardholders who purchase Starbucks using their Citibank Clear MasterCard. Buy a short and get a tall, buy a tall and get a *grande*, or buy a grande and get a *venti*. It's that simple.

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Ma

EASTERN TELECOMS SPONSORS 2001 MABUHAY AWARDS

Eastern Telecommunications Philippines Inc. (Etpi) sponsored the 2001 Mabuhay Awards held at the Pan Pacific Hotel, Manila recently. Mabuhay Awards is the Service Excellence Awards Program organized by the Association of Human Resources Managers (in the hospitality industry). Etpi deputy president and CEO Nenita Lim-Cruz (second from right) hands over the cash prize to Michael Albana of The Westin Philippine Plaza's sales manager for being the supervisor of the year. Also shown are (from left) Etpi vice president for human resources and administration Victor F. Alcuaz and president/human resources director of the Cravings Groups Anabell O. Moreno. Eastern Telecoms is one of the country's leading providers of internet data and voice communications services. It is also a landline telephone provider in Manila and Caloocan.

GARY TOPBILLS 'REVOLUTION 02'

Bonifacio Global City's explosive New Year spectacle, 'Revolution 02,' was an even more electrifying experience with the special participation of Gary Valenciano, 2001 TOYM awardee for contemporary music and Awit awardee for best male recording artist and best concert act. During his concert titled 'Pasasalamat,' Gary inspired thousands with his music and led the countdown to 2002, culminating in a massive fireworks display that erupted at exactly midnight. Shown is the contract signing for Gary Valenciano, with (seated, from left) Fort Bonifacio Development Corp.'s Jose Ma. K. Lim, senior vice president and chief financial officer; Manila Genesis Entertainment and Management Inc.'s Angeli P. Valenciano, president and Gina Maria Valenciano Martinez, executive vice president. Standing (from left) are Elizabeth G. Rabuy, general manager, Bonifacio Estate Services Corp.; David S. Nugent, communications counsellor, Metro Pacific Corp. and Ayen Garcia, account director, Manila Genesis Entertainment and Management Inc.

LOREN MEETS TOMIICHI

Majority leader Loren Legarda-Leviste met with former Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, now president of the Asia Women's Fund, during her recent trip to Japan, where she was invited as opinion leader. The two leaders discussed their common advocacy regarding the plight of Filipino comfort women, particularly Japan's move to provide official development assistance (ODA) through grassroots projects to the surviving few comfort women.

Condo living highlighted in My Home's 6th issue

VERTICAL developments take center stage in the latest issue of Earth+Style My Home magazine. Highlights include the stylish "showroom" abode of Old Asia's Monette Mapa, design icon Edong Lazatin's mod pad in Tagaytay Highlands and interior designer Ivy Almario's cosmopolitan flat for people in the fast lane. Also featured is the Muslim-inspired home of one of the country's style icons, Tingting Cojuangco, as well as the ancestral vacation home of Basic Advertising's chair and CEO, Herminio Ordoñez. Palanca awardee Ino Manalo takes you on a tour of his Philippine-themed yet contemporary home.

Design spotlight, a regular section of Earth+Style My Home, provides tips on beautifying storage spaces to help achieve the harmony of function and style while keeping clutter away. The garden section features the sprawling backyard designed by Tony Leaño, inspired by Antipolo's famous Hinulugang Taktak. In the entertainment section, paper artist Tes Pasola shares her unique gift packaging ideas, just in time for the upcoming Yuletide season.

Published by Earth+Style Corp., the lifestyle property developer, in cooperation with Mega Magazine and Publications Inc. (MMPI), Earth+Style My Home continues to make beautiful Filipino lifestyles happen through providing tools necessary to cope with today's fast-paced environment. Earth+Style My Home is available bi-monthly in newsstands, bookstores and specialty shops nationwide for P125.

BayanTel upgrades facilities with 'Todo Bigay Serbisyo'

BAYAN Telecommunications Inc. announced recently that a major portion of its P1.5-billion capital expense budget has been appropriated to further upgrade and maintain its facilities.

Among the priorities in the budget is the rehabilitation of 483 Outside Plant Access Cabinets (Opacs) which technically serve as direct switches to the subscribers' residence or building.

Mar Santos, BayanTel vice president for network, said the company would even be providing emergency power generators on site to back-up the system.

Michael C. Cervantes, BayanTel assistant vice president for corporate affairs, stressed that this project would address the concerns of subscribers about telephone service particularly during stormy weather and brownouts.

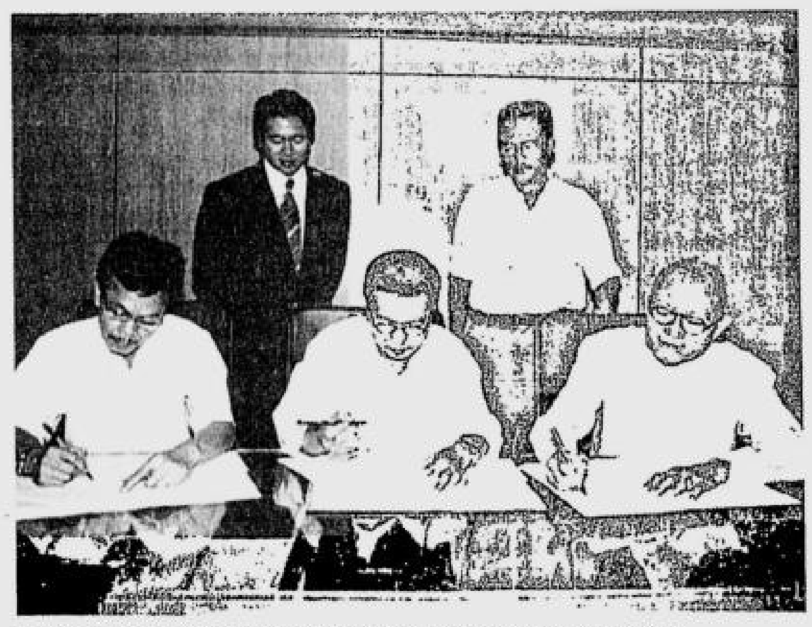
"We are fast tracking this project in all our franchise areas in Metro Manila as well as in the provinces particularly Agusan, Bicol and Tacloban.

"We want to be able to assure our customers that BayanTel is putting all its effort to ensure our subscribers continue to get the quality and reliable service they expect from us."

Cervantes also revealed that the rehabilitation project is part of a total campaign called "Todo Bigay Serbisyo" which aims to assure total customer satisfaction and confidence in the company from application to after-sales service.

4A'S ARAL SEMINAR 2001

the 2001 4A's (Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies-Philippines) Aral Seminar on Account Planning was conducted recently at AIM-Acceed Center, Makati. Four of the prominent names in the advertising and marketing industry, Mon Jimenez of Jimenez D' arcy, Nandy Villar of McCann Erickson, Eileen Araneta of Unilever and Vicky Ortega of Lowe Lintas and Partners were the speakers in the seminar. Posing for posterity are (from left) Jos Ortega, co-chair of 2001 4A's Aral, Vicky Ortega, account planning director of Lowe Lintas and Partners and, Billy Rockwell, co-chair of 2001 4A's Aral and 4A's director-in-charge.



TIMES SURETY CONTRACT WITH NEW AGENT

Times Surety and Insurance Corp., one of the leading non-life insurance firms in the country, welcomes MV Insurance Agency as the company's newest addition to its growing sales force. Signing the agreement at its head office in Makati City are production assistant Teodoro Baylon, MV Insurance general manager Marcelino Villar and Times senior vice president Amado Casaclang. Witnessing the signing ceremony are Times SVP Paulo Reyes and MV Insurance Agency senior partner Gerson Mangune.

SAP
ssip, inc.

SSIP-ASIA STRENGTHENS ALLIANCE WITH SAP

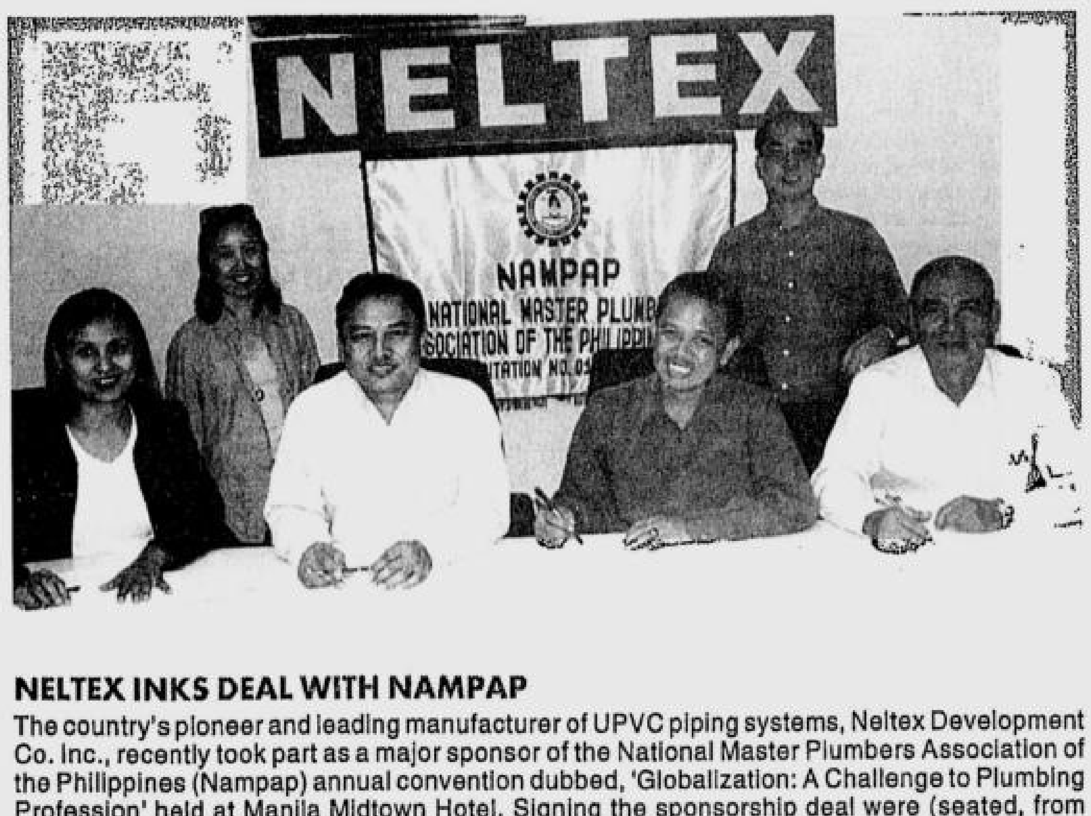
Strategic Systems and Information Professionals Inc. (SSIP), a US-based management and technology consulting firm, announced that it has renewed its implementation partner agreement with SAP. SSIP-led implementations in the Philippines include Shakey's Pizza, Citadel Holdings Inc., Equitable PCI Bank and the UniOil Group of Companies. While SSIP-Functional Application Support Teams or FAST were used extensively by Honda Cars Makati Inc., Philippine Investment Management (Phinma), Procter and Gamble and Shell Philippines. Shown are (seated, from left) Marivic Segismundo Gamo, SAP Philippines marketing and alliance manager; Ian Black, SAP Philippines managing director; Francisco Pax Lapid, SSIP-Asia president and CEO and Jay Sulangi, SSIP-Asia assistant vice president for operations. Standing are (from left) Jose Lorenzo Diaz, SSIP-Asia consulting manager and Andree Kintanar, SSIP-Asia HR manager.

Rebekah Esther, please

WHAT a difference a comma makes.

In the INQUIRER's obituary section last Monday, Dec. 31, one of the names of the children of the deceased Manuel "Baby" D. Asensio read Rebekah, Esther. The correct name should have read Rebekah Esther.

We sincerely apologize to the family of the late Manuel D. Asensio, Jr for any inconvenience this oversight has caused. We extend our deepest condolences.



NELTEX INKS DEAL WITH NAMPAP

The country's pioneer and leading manufacturer of UPVC piping systems, Neltex Development Co. Inc., recently took part as a major sponsor of the National Master Plumbers Association of the Philippines (Nampap) annual convention dubbed, 'Globalization: A Challenge to Plumbing Profession' held at Manila Midtown Hotel. Signing the sponsorship deal were (seated, from left) Marites Tan, Neltex ads and promo manager; Rollie Cabansay, Neltex assistant vice president for market development; Alberto Cabael, Nampap national president and engineer Ricardo Vasquez, Nampap convention chair. Also present were (standing from left) Teray Rivas, project marketing head and Romeo Collado, Nampap executive secretary.

e-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph.

PEOPLE at WORK

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ■ REGINA GALANG REYES, Subsection Editor

Nurse leader achieves bittersweet success abroad

PHOTO BY BOY BAGWIS

DIOCSON

By Blanche S. Rivera

CAREER*Tales*

IT WAS 27 years ago when Cecilia Diocson first nurtured the American dream in her heart. She was a young nurse then and, like her peers, had dreamed of going abroad to explore the more lucrative opportunities that beckon in a foreign land.

Now, almost three decades later, Diocson finds herself as a top-level nurse in a hospital, not in the United States, but in Canada, where fate has taken her and taught her that life was far from being an American dream.

This charming lady came back to the Philippines to attend an international conference on migrant workers sponsored by Migrante International last November.

She came to Canada in 1975 with only her visa and a letter from the Montreal Jewish General Hospital that there was a job waiting for her. She was with friends and colleagues from the Medical Center Manila where she earlier worked.

She was 24 then and was fresh from a one-year stint as a nurse in Germany. After coming back here, it took her only four months to grab a job in Canada through correspondence with different hospitals.

The young nurse shared an apartment with Filipino friends and immensely enjoyed her work in the company of fellow Filipinos. She says 80 percent of the staff of the Montreal Jewish General Hospital were Asians.

For almost three years, Diocson surveyed Canada, known to be a land of milk and honey which welcomes migrants with open arms, and finally decided to settle down there. Her Filipino boyfriend flew in and got a job as controller in a transportation company.

"It was easier for us then, unlike now when you have to pay at least P120,000 just to process your papers and get a job," Diocson says.

Raising a family

"For all of us, whether nurse or maid, it's non-stop work. It's very difficult to raise a family in that situation," she admits.

Diocson's husband had to quit his job to take care of their two kids, who needed a parent to take them to school, watch their ballgames and meet their friends. He was "househusband" for five years until they moved to Vancouver.

Besides the daily grind of raising kids, Diocson says Filipino parents were vital in explaining the discrimination experienced by colored children in Canada.

She recalls a time when a security guard followed her and her two children to the parking lot, thinking that they stole the school materials they picked up at the shop even when there was a receipt.

"Discrimination is subtle but it's an everyday experience," Diocson says, noting that Filipinos continue to come to Canada despite such difficulties apparently because life is economically more difficult here.

Discrimination

Diocson also observed during her first few years as a nurse in Montreal and then Vancouver that people of color were bypassed in promotions. Not only were foreign workers disadvantaged because of their different educational backgrounds, their race was also a factor.

"Filipinos there are so industrious. They just work and work even if they see the discrimination," she says, adding that most migrant workers take on more than one job to feed their families or send remittances to their relatives here.

Diocson however stuck to her job and eventually earned her place as a top-level nurse in a Vancouver hospital and as a leader of the Filipino Nurses Support Group (FNSG), an organization of Filipino medical workers in Canada.

Today, in place of dreams are harsh truths and experiences that have strengthened her to succeed despite the odds against Filipino migrant workers and to gather fellow Filipinos in Canada to fight discrimination.

Does team management work?

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I AM currently working in a retail company. I was happy with my job; it gives me high pay and good benefits. Then our big boss decided to leave the management to the local team while he stays abroad. My colleagues now manage the small company on a team basis unlike what our foreign boss used to do. The situation has become lax with no controls and no planning. I am able to set meetings and establish controls for my area but I noticed that in the other areas, merchandise and goods are being manipulated. I've been telling this to our boss but still he gives them a chance. I am demoralized. I wish I could leave, but it is hard to get another job. And I know leaving is not the solution. I want to see change and improvement while I am in the company. The innocent employees and staff need help.

Disappointed Team Member

You have cause for concern. In the retail business, control is essential to ensure the profitability of the enterprise. Thus, it is a cause of worry that your company is being managed without controls and planning. However, the fact that a team is leading your company rather than a single leader with sole responsibility for results, should not be a cause for worry. In our company, a management committee of five people shares leadership. And yet, we are very pleased with our corporate performance as well as the friendly relationships in the team that make work fun.

Shared leadership

So what can you do? There are three pillars you have to build for shared leadership to work. The first is having clear and shared goals. You have to meet and talk about goals and how they are to be deployed throughout the organization. You have to ask your regional boss what his expectations are in terms of clear corporate measures such as sales volume or profit margins. Then, develop consensus as a group on the goals and the means to achieve the goals.

The second pillar is clarity of roles. Persons working in a team normally play specific roles. Belbin says that it is important that vital roles are played in a team. In your team, it may be that the evaluator/monitor and controller roles are not being played. You are trying to play these roles but there is little appreciation coming from the team. I propose that you undertake a role diagnosis as a team, then proceed to clarify the roles that each one in the team can and should play. A team building intervention can be of help to your group.

The third pillar is agreement on processes and standards. As a team, develop the cross-functional processes that get work done; then, agree on standards. It will also be useful to set norms or rules for working together.

Once you are able to articulate and pursue clear goals, recognize roles and set processes and standards, you will see team productivity and company performance improve.

ILLUSTRATION BY JED ESTRADA

Bad attitudes

What saddens me about your company situation is the fact that as Filipinos we serve very well when the boss is a foreigner. This may be due to our colonial heritage. In this case, there is the golden opportunity given the group to produce results as a management team. Instead of coming together as a cohesive team, I can sense a "*kanya-kanya*" attitude that is counterproductive.

When you talk about merchandise being manipulated, I wonder if there are unethical practices happening. These have to stop because they can cause the spiral downward of company morale and performance. Your principals may lose trust and just close the country office. Or send a representative to take over operations, as has happened in a number of companies.

One client of mine, a foreign national once asked me, "How come my Filipino staff cannot seem to maintain high standards? Once they reach a certain level of productivity, they are content, then performance starts to slide." Almost embarrassed, I had to explain to him our tendency to be "*ningas cogon*" resulting in a lack of persistence and discipline.

Constant follow through

Our orientation is short term; we are unwilling to sacrifice for long term results. What is key to consistent performance is constant monitoring and follow through. Recently, we conducted a workshop on cross culture management for a leading multinational consumer company. One exercise required them to brainstorm proverbs from their respective countries. It was a discovery for the Filipinos in the group that we have many self-defeating attitudes that underpin our sayings.

If you choose to play the role of a change agent, you have to possess flexibility and perseverance. You may first have to build awareness of the need to change, then engage your team in joint problem solving and discovery of solutions. It is of utmost importance that your team develops ownership and involvement of the change initiatives. Your best contributions in making a difference in your company are building the team, checking unethical practices, and reflecting and uprooting negative cultural practices. Wishing you all the success in your role as change catalyst.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail to ancillaedc@pacific.net.ph *or fax to 892-2902.)*

Interns get competitive edge in job market

By Arnel L. Cadeliña

POSTCARDS FROM THE CORPORATE *EDGE*

AS a business professor in a state college, I am often pestered by my students to write on how a graduating student can land his first job in a highly competitive world. Although, I am not Peter Drucker nor Stephen Covey, I can give them advice to stir their brains based on my 14 years corporate experience.

I am sure that all graduating students are asking themselves what will be their future amidst the never-ending sad stories about unemployment that clog radio and TV on the six o'clock news everyday. They would probably say, "Okay, I already know those *%##* things! What I really want to know is how can I be more competitive."

Known quantity

This is a sensible concern, considering that in order to survive you have to find a job. So how can you be more competitive? It's easy: become an intern. In the world of marketing, the three most important words are location, location, location. For those who are aiming for their first jobs, the three most important words are internships, internships, internships.

Internships offer students the opportunity to have hands-on experience. The National University of Singapore (NUS) requires their business students to go on internship for one semester and the student earns college credit, instead of money, which is applied as a requirement for graduation.

When I was with Pilipino Telephone Corporation (PILTEL), our HR Director, who was originally from Levi's Strauss, regularly hired interns since he believed that interns are prospective employees. According to the HR Director, PILTEL will be spending more valuable time and money on applicants who have not yet been fully assessed by the company. On the other hand, the intern's work habits and personal attributes are revealed during the internship and weigh more with the HR Director as compared to a half-hour interview of unknown applicants.

Friend's experience

"Had I not done that internship, I certainly would never be where I am today—or even gotten my first job," proclaims my friend Rick Lopez. During our college days, Rick was an intern at a government bank. We thought that the bank was taking advantage of him because he was working without pay.

But, as fate would prove, the internship paid a wonderful dividend. Rick's first job after college was in the same bank. When we met at Pag-ibig Fund in 1989, Rick proudly said that college graduates who have worked in internships receive more job offers than those with no internship experience. After this experience, I no longer viewed a nonpaying internship as valueless.

A graduating student must be able to market what he does best in order to increase his chances of getting an internship. Based on my experience, not all companies seek students with the highest grades for their internship programs. Companies also look at school activities in which the prospective intern participates in because these give insights into what the student is about.

The HR Manager will always ask: Is he outgoing? Is she a team player? Is she a good leader? Can she adjust to changing situations? These questions are very important for a company and they can not be answered simply by showing your 1.25 general average.

Attributes

In general, companies look for the following attributes when they look for possible interns:

- Positive attitude
- Friendly, fun personality
- Deep interest in the products of the company
- Personal hobbies or interests
- Extracurricular activities
- His major or field of specialization
- Flexibility and time availability
- Feeling driven to accomplish tasks
- Mature thinking
- Eagerness to help others
- Ability to work for little or no pay

Remember, being an intern in a company is a win-win strategy and as a starter, it will spice up your resume.

Mr. Cadeliña is a Professor in the School of Business Administration of the Southern Luzon Polytechnic College in Lucban, Quezon.

(Send contributions to Postcards to rreyes@inquirer.com.ph*)*

Reflect on nuggets of leadership wisdom

RECIPES*for* LEARNING

By Moje Ramos-Aquino

MAY you and your loved ones have a blessed New Year!

Ready to meet Y2002? What New Year's resolutions did you make? How many? Hmmmm, are you sure that is your final answer?

You need to be able to lead yourself and steadfastly hang on to your vision, mission and values in order to keep your resolutions. Don't you worry, I shall be holding your hands the whole year because starting today we shall be discussing our Recipe for Leadership.

Thinking precedes planning and doing. To start our discussion, let's review some existing literature on the subject of leadership. As we do this, you may want to reflect on them and examine your own personal leadership principles and style. The following are nuggets of wisdom quoted by Jim Clemmer and Art McNeil in their book "Leadership Skills for Every Manager."

Sir Isaac Newton: If I have been able to see farther than others, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.

Roy Ash: Creativity in a business organization cannot be ordered like breakfast at the Waldorf; instead it must be stimulated, motivated, induced.

General George S. Patton: Wars may be fought with weapons but they are won by men. It is the spirit of men who follow and of men who lead that gains the victory.

Stanley Baldwin: Had the employers of the past generation dealt fairly with men, there would have been no trade unions.

Clemmer and McNeil: You do not lead by hitting people over the head; that's assault, not leadership.

Clemmer and McNeil: Too many managers see human beings as resources with skin wrapped around them.

Robert Half: A company cannot increase its productivity. People can.

Napoleon Bonaparte: The only way to lead people is show them a future. A leader is a dealer in hope.

Charles Garfield: Alignment occurs when individuals perceive that contributing to an organization produces direct contributions to their personal mission. The more opportunities an organization gives to its people to align their personal missions with its own, the more likely it is to succeed.

Thomas Carlyle: Only the man of worth can recognize worth in men.

Livy: Confidence placed in another often compels confidence in return.

John Wanamaker: Some people, without knowing it, carry with them a magnifying glass, with which they see, when they wish, other people's imperfections.

William Boetcker: The man who is worthy of being a "leader of men" will never complain about the stupidity of his helpers, the ingratitude of mankind nor the inappreciation of the public. To meet and overcome them, and not go down before them in disgust, discouragement or defeat—that is the final proof of power.

Peter Drucker: So much of what we call management consists of making it difficult for people to work.

John Craig: No matter how much work a man can do, he will not advance far if he cannot work through others.

Andrew Carnegie's Epitaph: Here lies a man who knew how to bring into his service men better than he was himself.

Jack Zenger: Management at all levels would do well to keep the following in mind: He was hired for his grasp of technology. He was promoted for his ability to manage. He was fired for his failure to lead.

Confucius: To lead an untrained people to war is to throw them away.

Peter Drucker: Of all the decisions an executive makes, none are as important as the decisions about people because they determine the performance capacity of the organization.

Clemmer & McNeil: For each individual, personal leadership skills are circular in nature. The circle starts with the individual's innate values, goals and ability to translate desires and energy into reality. And it continues through to the people that this individual interacts with in the day-to-day environment.

William Boetcker: If you wish to succeed in managing and controlling others, learn to manage and control yourself.

Clarence Francis: You can buy a man's time, you can buy his physical presence at a given place, you can even buy a measured number of his skilled muscular motions per hour. But you cannot buy enthusiasm, you can not buy loyalty, you can not buy the devotion of hearts, minds or souls. You must earn these.

Arnold "Red" Auerbach: We like our players to play for fun and to be happy rather than afraid. It's like that in any business. If you have employees who work through fear, you're not going to get any ingenuity out of them. You're not going to get employees who will take a gamble or come up with their ideas. All you'll have are robots who are going to do their jobs, have a low-key approach, stay out of trouble. They'll put in their hours and go home.

Andrew Carnegie: The secret of success lies not in doing your own work, but in recognizing the right man to do it.

The Tao of Leadership: The wise leader does not try to protect people from themselves. The light of awareness shines equally on what is pleasant and on what is not.

John D. Rockefeller: Good management consists of showing average people how to do the work of superior people.

Walter Gilbey: The employer generally gets the employees he deserves.

Henry J. Kaiser: I make progress by having other people around me who are smarter than I am and listening to them. And I assume that everyone is smarter about something than I am.

Casey Stengel: It's easy to get the players. Getting them to play together, that's the hardest part.

S.I. Hayakawa: If you can see in any given situation only what everybody else can see, you can be said to be so much a representative of your culture that you are a victim of it.

Martin Luther King, Jr.: The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Michaelangelo's motto: I am still learning.

(Send feedback to Moje, Ramos@Aquino.ZZN.com*)*

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WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2002

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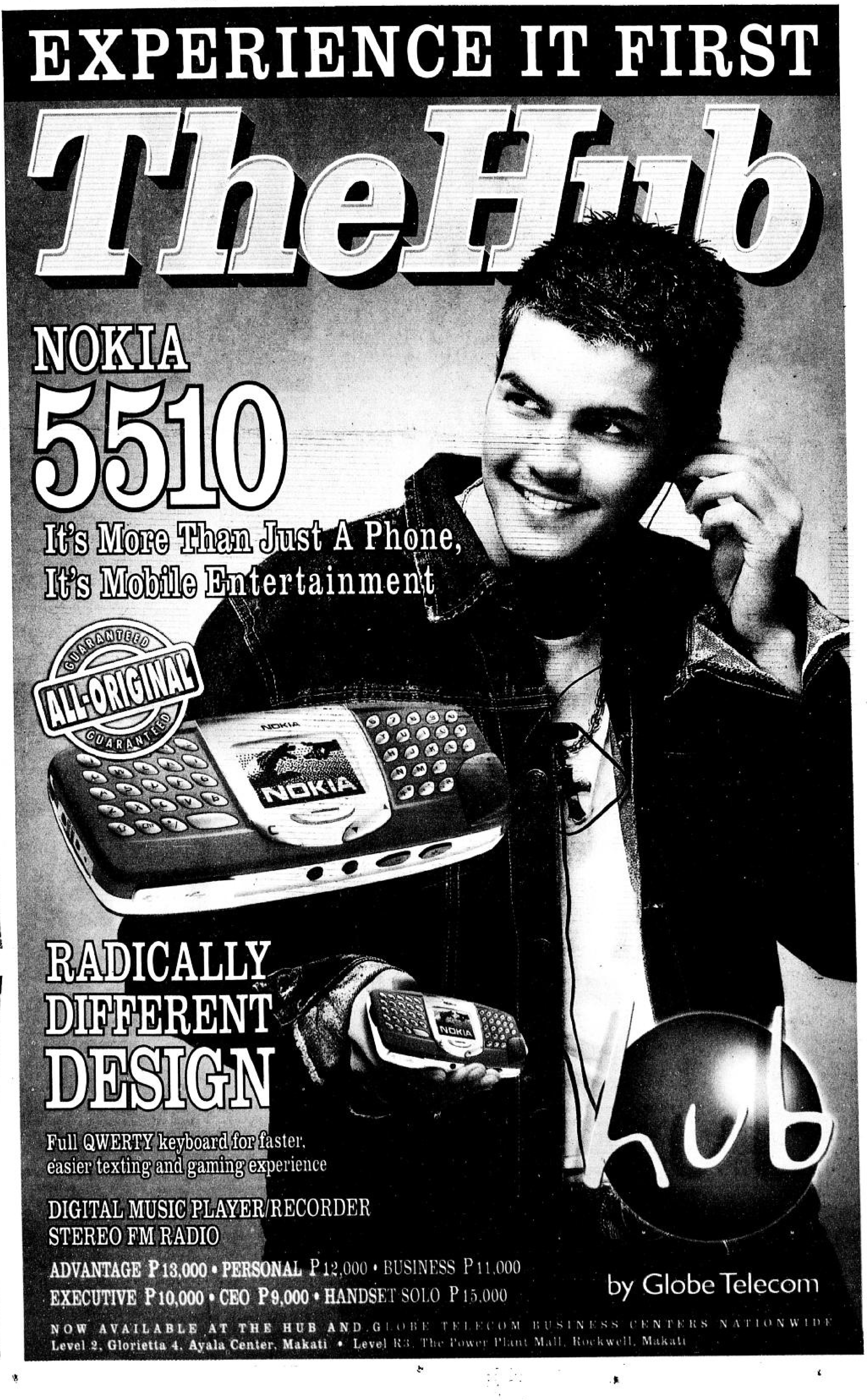
2bU! gazes into its crystal ball and without fear or batting an eyelash lists the personalities, fashions, tech trends and sounds that will dominate the Year of Speed



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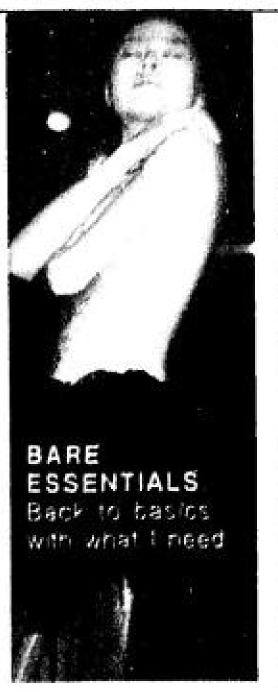
FRINGED SHOW. This year's trashy look

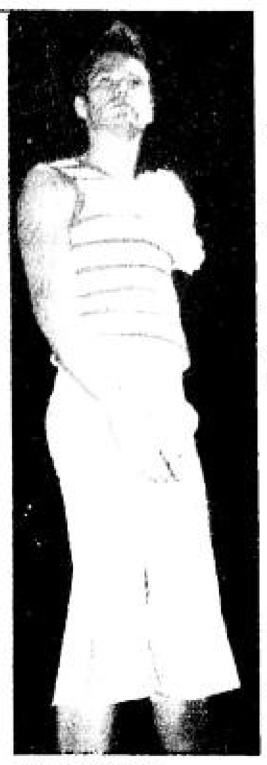
WHITE LADY. Spring 2002's light tones spell white

SOUTHERN COMFORT. Model Asher prefers cool casuals

FASHION victor or victim, you be the judge.

BAUBLES AND BEADS. Hip-happy white top

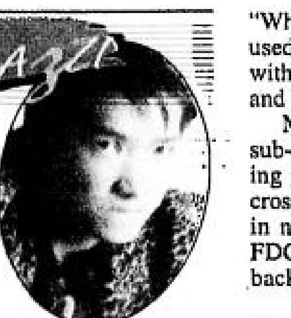



DANDYMAN. Dennis the Menace stripes plus "Sex in the City" brooch

2002 . . . the morning after

YOU wake up, nursing a hangover from last night's New Year's eve shebang which had your friends guzzling beer or popping party pills like there was no tomorrow. Either that or you just slept through it, getting up to do the routine of brushing the teeth, showering and eating breakfast. Then you open the papers and suddenly realize—uh, oh it's 2002!

TOP SHOP's modern hippie



Tim Yap

Yes, Moe, Larry and Curly, the future is now. 2002 used to mean the future—the laser-beam-toting, giant high-tech-skyscraping adventure of a scary sci-fi feature. The Jetsons sure didn't get to live to see the world that we see now, but in these "retro-vival" times when the concepts of past and future are blurred, who knows? The style cycle turns its wheel too fast, from the "Is it back? But it really never went away" school of trendspotting.

With fashion, trends and parties moving at 70 images per second, what is in now may be passé the next nanosecond and vice versa. The victim (fashion, techie and otherwise) within us all is in a state of panic. Just bought an 8840 phone? Well, they just launched the 9980. Hurry up, buy it, because next week, there will be the new Nimbus 2002.

So what does 2002 hold for us partyphiles? I was curious for answers, consulting friends, trendophiles, magazines, industry observers, even Rina, the psychic at Hyatt's Tempura Misono for astrological advice. Stephanie Villaraza, Milkwear trendspotter, says, "Big hair! As in curly but loose and long. (As in Miss Venezuela big?)" She continues with "White is the new black and leather used like fabric such as woven bags with fringe will be the rage, as with folk and hippie chic."

ROUGH RIDER. Jean slavery with an attitude

Marge Enriquez, this paper's style sub-section editor, texts me that "mixing geometry with floral prints, going cross cultural and eclectic style" will be in next year, the "Age of Aquarius." FDCP president Randy Ortiz looks back to the past and tells me "military, safari and hippie" will become the prevailing trends.

Armed with info from my own research, let me do a pseudo Faith Popcorn and report to you my Top 10 fearless forecast on the youth sector for the year 2002.

1. Hippie fashion

There is no conspiratorial message from designers but the general feeling is that people will have a renewed attraction to the bohemian, gypsy, touchy-feely, peace-loving eccentricity of the hippie period. This 2002 version is a more embellished (baubles, bangles and beads) "bobo" (that's bourgeois bohemian to you and me) of the years' past.

2. Back to basics sense of well being

With the recent events that shook the world, people are finding out for themselves what is really more important in their lives. Introspection, yoga and simplification of one's life are fruits of this new mood to look within.

3. High tech vs. low-tech

As a backlash to the rapid release of "techno-tronic" devices every minute, young consumers will tend to buy gadgets more according to their needs. They will not get the latest model full of functions but which they can't use. It's also choosing the Atari over PlayStation, the Walkman over the Discman and the black and white portable TV than the colored flat screen. Vintage chic applies as well to appliances.

TORN DECADENCE. Jeans that have passed the test

4. Eclectic and cross cultural

It's mixing your Brazilian belt, Tibetan skirt and bejeweled Moroccan slippers for that global bobo look. Or your chinois top, plaid skirt, fur jacket and cowboy boots for the East meets West prairie look. Get it? Whatever.

5. Fringe benefits

After the Fendi tote, the Birkins and the Anya Hinmarches of the world, comes the Tanner Krolle (by Julien MacDonald) black shoulder bag. See everything with fringes (even the Jolina doll) to move out of the racks this coming season!

6. Image models and book launches

These were last year's hits, from KC to Borgy to "Patrick Rosas "Images" and Rajo's "01" book launch. This year expect more "new faces" to endorse old brands and people who wish to be immortalized all over again come up with another project. Here's to more.

7. Chill and R&B spots

With guest international DJs left and right doing the rounds of the techno circuit, the pumping beats of house will still be ever present, but this time with stylish siblings "chill and R&B" both who have a huge following among the young.

8. The new Greenbelt Mall

This multi-complex will open mid-year to countless "gimmick" spots, cafés, restos, bars and clubs. Watch out and see it sweep Manila by its feet!

9. Theatrics in theme parties

Bored of the same old birthday bashes in smoky areas, the new theme parties will be filled with surprise elements—from performers to artists, hydraulics to special effects—escapist realities for the savvy celebrant.

10. Age of Aquarius renaissance in youth art

People are going to be more expressive of their beliefs and will be more in touch with their creative and spiritual side. More young people will frequent the galleries because young artists are also increasing in number. Street art will be reborn.

This, and more, (if my gut feel is right) are things to look forward to this 2002. The photos on this page were taken from a Hong Kong trend show for the hip watch TechnoMarine. Trends or non-trends, it is always up to us to choose what fits.

One thing is for sure. The future is here. Seize it.

FLORAL appliqués mixed with geometric stockings

LIV Tyler, living the "hip-pie" lifestyle

Stars who will shine in 2002

With the fanaticism for basketball getting stronger, a new breed of 'crush ng bayan' emerges—college ball players

BY JULES ALCANTARA

IT is the beginning of a new year and it's time once again for making projections, fearless forecasts and predictions.

Much to our delight, 90 percent of the stars 2bU said would shine in 2001 did just that. Jericho Rosales and Kristine Hermosa are now household names. Celebrity daughter KC Concepcion had the splashiest debut and announcement of endorsement contract last year. Cogie Domingo and Anne Curtis Smith hogged the headlines. Singer Bituin Escalante and web designer Drew Europeo made waves. Models Christian Vasquez and Derek Ramsey proved they were worth watching, as we predicted.

This time, we foresee that the following may very well gallop to fame and success in this Year of the Horse.

Heart Evangelista

She was a standout in Star Circle's newest batch of hopefuls. It didn't take a lot of smarts to figure out that she would be one of the few (if not the only one) who would create a stir in a wannabe-congested showbiz world. Survey says that Evangelista is the new "Crush ng Bayan." Mention her name and guys sigh and swoon. The year 2002 could give this charmer the opportunity to dazzle us with her talents as well.

John Pratts, young actor

Drumbeaters herald him as the heir apparent to the throne of Aga Muhlach. It is easy to see why. Among the new crop of male young stars, Pratts seems to have the monopoly on cuteness, much like Muhlach especially when the latter was younger. And just like the recently married heartthrob, Pratts not only looks good but has also shown potential of becoming a great dramatic actor.

Brandie Tan, art director, BBDO

Francis Bernard G. Tan more popularly known as Brandie (that's Brandie with ie) is made of really strong stuff. A graduate of Fine Arts from the University of the Philippines Diliman and an alumnus of Fine Arts Advertising in the Academy of Art College in San Francisco, this art director for BBDO is young and brilliant. On his first trip to Cebu recently, he brought home two gold, three silver and five bronze prizes from the 2001 Araw Advertising Awards. Did we happen to mention that he is only 24 years old? Expect this guy to move and shake the advertising industry in the future.

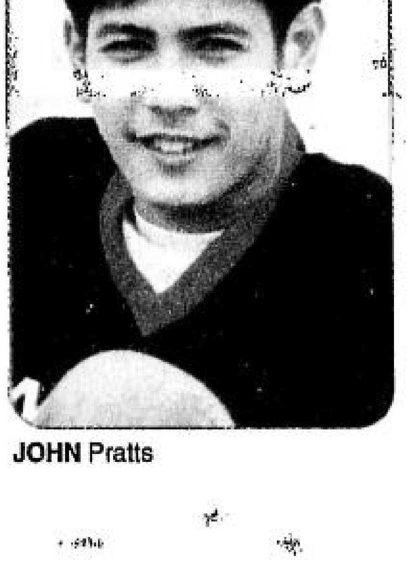
TANYA Garcia

Avid Liongoren, filmmaker, web designer

Wonderboy Liongoren is a cartoonist-digital artist, web developer, video director who has redefined the art scene with his angst-free cartoons in rocketsheep.net and littlerocket.net. The work of the artist, who describes himself as "angst-free," can also be seen in Pulp Magazine. He has done videos for Moonstar 88 and Barbie's Cradle. Want to know more? Check out http://www.littlerocket.net/avid/ and elevate your mind.

Neil Galang, creative director, Big Dipper Digital

Who would have thought that this graduate of developmental studies from Ateneo de Manila University would become one of the leaders of digital design in the country? With the wacom (mouse pen) as his wand, and Photoshop, Macromedia Flash and other software as his modern tools of art, Galang lets us into a world that exists only in his digital dreams. To mere mortals, he is a young wizard who leaves us in awe of his designs and concepts. Currently, he serves as creative director of Big Dipper Digital, one of the most successful web publishing companies in the country. He is mentor to promising artists like Gerry Isaac, Berni Ganaban, MK Magallanes and Buff Tanedo. To view his works, which range from the ethereal to the macabre, check out http://www.bigdipperdigital.com/pixelrelish/


JOHN Pratts

Julia Clarete, actress

Every year, a new antagonist, a new "kontrabida" rises in the world of soap opera that gives new meaning, a new dimension to the words scheming and manipulative. In 2001, everyone loved to hate Sally, the girl who made lives miserable in "Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan." But now Sheila Montecillo, played by former "Ang TV" regular Julia Clarete, is giving Sally fierce competition not only because of her evil ways but also her killer looks. Oozing with appeal and talent, it won't be a surprise at all if Clarete, as Sheila, dislodges Sally as the girl we will all love to hate.

HEART Evangelista

Tanya Garcia, soap opera actress

Slowly but surely, this former ABS-CBN talent is building a following of her own in GMA's soap opera, "Sana ay Ikaw na Nga." Garcia seems to be destined for greater things as she proves herself worthy of leading a new drama series and tries to find a place in the soap opera world where Kristine Hermosa, Claudine Barretto and Judy Ann Santos reign supreme. With a face that could launch a thousand ships and eyes that are so expressive, it won't come as a shock if she gives the soap opera superstars a run for their money.

College Ball Players

They are the new demi gods, the new heartthrobs of this generation. With the fanaticism for basketball getting stronger, a new breed of "crush *ng bayan*" emerges—college ball players. These are not just the guys who don jerseys for the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) but also for the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA). People are in a frenzy over the upcoming PBA draft on Jan. 13. Apart from half-Filipino players and superstars from the Metropolitan Basketball Association (MBA), this year's PBA draft will be even more exciting with UAAP and NCAA personalities like Ren Ren Ritualo, Yancy de Ocampo, Leo Avenido and Chester Tolomia entering the draft. Everyone is waiting with bated breath for what could be another Ateneo-La Salle Finals in the upcoming 65th UAAP season. With Franz Pumaren leading another rookie-filled La Salle Green Archers team and Joel Banal guiding the powerhouse Ateneo Blue Eagles team, college basketball just gets more exciting.

With reports from Pinky Viola

JULIA Clarete

A fearless music forecast

to be young • to be you • to be young • To be you! •
2bU!

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

"MUSIC is a cycle." Or so says my music teacher back in high school. Looking back, I remember the time when '60s music almost became a trend (Cherry Poppin' Daddies), and disco days threatened to make a comeback (U2's "Pop"). Indeed, my teacher made a lot of sense. Music truly evolves. Take pop. All these boy bands have been inspired by the '80s music and past pop culture.

This year, lots of boy bands are going to evolve, rap-metal music is going to subside and lounge music will rule. With the advent of Linkin Park and Shaggy, it's hard to say that the Weezers and PJ Harveys of music would make it on the charts in *this* country. As music reinvents itself, the public has yet to open its ears and minds to new music that constantly pops up. How many people flock to hole-in-the-wall bars to check out local acts? How many people shell out P250 to hear OPM music that would knock off Britney Spears' socks?

I can't predict the foreign music scene for 2002. That's the job of Billboard and Rolling Stone. And the local scene?

If people weren't too busy obsessing over the latest cell phone model or spending their allowances on CounterStrike games, they would probably notice how much the music industry has grown this year. So many musicians have come up with great, ear-friendly music that many failed to acknowledge. Indie music began its revolution, thanks to releases like Definition Records' "Mutual Admiration Society" and the Pin-Up Girls' debut album. Viva released so many good OPM albums this year—Imago, Itchyworms!, Radioactive Sago Project, Rivermaya, Brownbeat All-Stars—with more on the way (Sugarfree).

Local music in 2002

So where is music headed to in 2002? 2bU! went straight to the source: the musicians themselves.

I like the way things look, but I wish we, as a market, can look beyond the packaging and see/recognize genuine talent. OPM has come a long way and continues to grow. The technology itself in our market can be utilized better, but we're learning. I like the outlook for 2002!—**Benni Obana, 89.9 TM DJ**

Nu-metal bands will evolve and there'll be more recording with orchestras and Gregorian monks. They will also start wearing mullets instead of dreads or shaven heads.—**Jason Caballa, Twisted Halo**

First, there will be a re-emergence of the keyboards. Then the disco. I think it's just a cycle of sorts.—**Jugs Jugueta, Itchyworms!**

It seems that local music listeners are becoming more interested in pop rock, considering the winners of the NU Rock Awards.—**Justin Sunico, Ciudad**

Hopefully, Osama bin Laden, if he'd still be alive, would develop a chemical bomb that would kill all the boy bands, Creed wannabes (plus Creed themselves), Korn, Limp Bizkit, Shaggy and all the copycats.—**Mon Castro, Pin-up Girls**

Actually I don't care or mind where music is headed to in 2002, as long as it's Filipino. And you can print that!—**Lizza Nakpil**

Unless we do something about the piracy problem, *kawawa ang mga* local artists *natin.*—**Francis Guevarra**

I think we'll be hearing more of the '80s rock/Nu wave influence in music next year. *Sana bumalik 'yung* glam.—**Mike Elgar, Rivermaya**

Times are hard, *eh.* Signed artists will have a pretty tough time releasing albums, but the indie bands will pretty much have their way. *Pwede nga sa* computer *lang gawin ang* album *eh. Pero* I think it's going to be a good year for artists like Itchyworms!, Imago and Cynthia Alexander. Finally, *napapansin na rin sila ng tao.* We can only hope that 2002 will be a great year of music. And *sana* more solo projects, *parang ginawa ni* Ely, Raimund and Rico. *Di sila natatali sa banda.*—**Ebe Dancel, Sugarfree**

I have no idea. The fan in me enjoys music most when it is unpredictable. Bring it on!—**Rico Blanco, Rivermaya**

I think we'll be seeing new forms of music in which various genres are melded together. But there will still be a demand for good ol' rock n' roll.—**Chino Singson, Itchyworms!**

Hopefully, kids will find their own music, not just what everyone's listening to. And I hope we'll listen to and love our own local tunes. *Mabuhay ang* independent *OPM!*—**Yanny, Lillian**

More melodic and progressional forms of rap-metal. More electronica. More bubblegum pop (spare us!)—**Jett Pangan, The Dawn**

Hip-hop and R&B are dominating the scene right now. So, I guess that's where music is headed to in 2002.—**Kyla**

With all the sh*t going around, the economic crisis, piracy and other troubles surrounding us, I think musicians should make more socially relevant tunes.—**Zach Lucero, Imago**

I guess technology and the Internet will play a major part in music. Make it more possible and easier for would be-musicians to get their music heard. Also, more indie releases.—**Diego Castillo, <s>andwich**

With the accessibility of home audio recording equipment, I think there would be more indie records, newer bands with new music, cheaper priced CDs—I hope!—and an effort to combat piracy.—**Annette Ortiz, Fatal Posporos**

Better songs! Less hype. Album to watch out for: Dong Abay's!—**Marcus Adoro, Eraserheads**

I don't know. Shucks! Hopefully..."better" music.—**Aia de Leon, Imago**

"Dear Lorna...
ang aga nagsilaglagan ng mga dahon.
Para bang nagmamadali. Gaya ng
buhay namin dito. Baka isa na rin
akong dahong malapit nang malagas."

Cherry Pie Picache is Tere. Her life is a blur of work, eat and sleep. The cycle threatens to dry her out, yet she yearns to share herself and find meaning in life.

A film by Laurice Guillen
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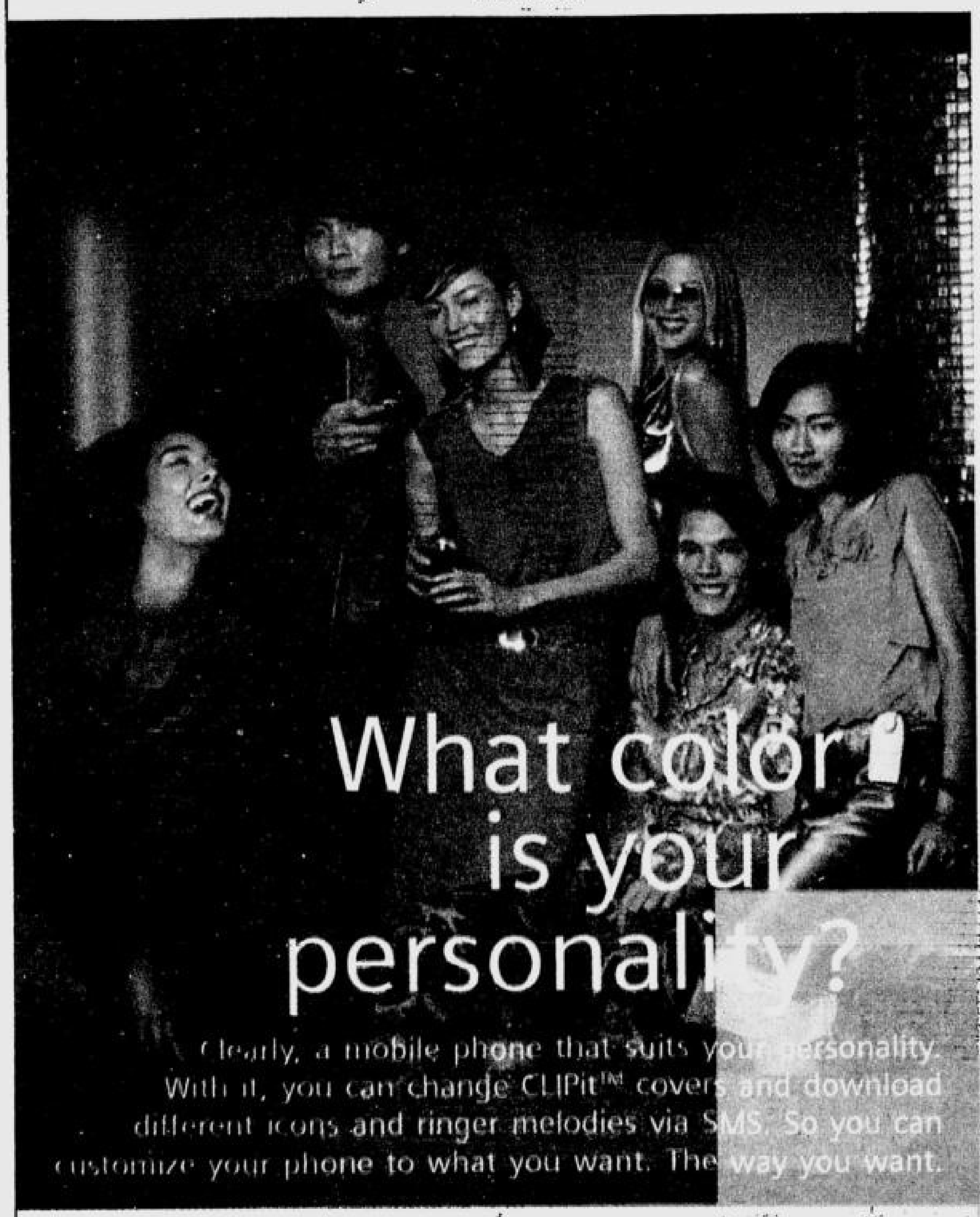

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New worlds and vistas await techies in 2002

GABRIEL H. MERCADO
2bU! Correspondent

ONE thing writers can do is pretend they know more than they actually do. A blatant example of this is a fearless technology forecast.

Fearless implies I am ready to do battle with everyone who disagrees. However, while I can say that I'm pretty confident about my forecast, this does not mean that what I say should be taken as Gospel truth.

Now that I have made the necessary disclaimers, sit back, relax and read.

Open source and Linux

To the press release-believing techie conditioned by the information technology (IT) industry to believe everything it says, open-source technology is the work of the devil himself. They can't believe that any person in his right mind will toil to create software then give it away for (gasp!) free.

The open-source industry will never have enough clout to tell press people what to do. People in this sector have little money. When they celebrated the personal computer's anniversary this year, it was a potluck affair. However, to the techie who can see beyond the pomp and spectacle that accompany sundry IT activities, open-source is the platform of the future.

It is free, customizable beyond belief, stable as a rock and more secure than a Swiss bank vault. Its many advocates are talking to one another to draw up standards. Printers, video cards and other computer peripherals can now support it, and the industry as a whole has embraced it prompting Microsoft, which has enough business to ensure profits for the next decade, to call it "a threat to democracy." *Sus!*

Prediction: This is a no-brainer. More and more will adopt Linux et al as a standard. If you have a PC, you would do well to start experimenting with open source, if only to see that there is more to computing than what one company sees fit to give you.

SMS (short message service) was widely embraced because, like open-source, it was free. At least in the beginning. By the time the telecom companies found out they had a monster cash cow on their hands and started charging for the service, Filipinos could no longer kick the habit of "texting," making the Philippines the SMS capital of the world.

SMS wormed its way into our lives because it was cool to send and receive instant messages from anyone at anytime. It wasn't really about "convenience," "efficiency" or other things one would use to describe a checking account. It was about being constantly in on gimmicks, jokes, gossip or even mushy stuff. And since it was free—at least initially—seeming to do it behind the telecom company's back gave such a delicious, tingly feeling.

Prediction: With the bewildering array of SMS services nowadays, from banking to gaming and even dating, watch out for services related to lifestyle and interaction among users. These have the most chances of success. However, if the new services do not give people that delicious feeling that they are getting away with something mischievous, there's a great chance the momentum will be lost.

The Internet as network

One usually sees the Internet as web pages and chat rooms, but it is actually so much more. It is a network of millions of miles of cables connecting all of us. With this year's Napster and other file-sharing applications, people are beginning to appreciate that fact.

I see a future when people will stop taking the Internet for just what they see and hear, but will try to find what more creative things they can send over this network. We already have various types of multimedia, such as graphics, stored or "real-time" music and video. But that's old-hat now.

Prediction: Beyond the website, more services will be offered such as bringing buyers and sellers together, or creating opportunities for people to collaborate. 2002 will be the year of the Instant Messenger, which will be the only true 24/7 connectivity tool out there.

Friendlier and cheaper PCs

Hardware is not such a big factor anymore for today's desktop PC. We can now get processors, memory and hard disk sizes that are more than we would ever need at very reasonable prices. So where do we go from here?

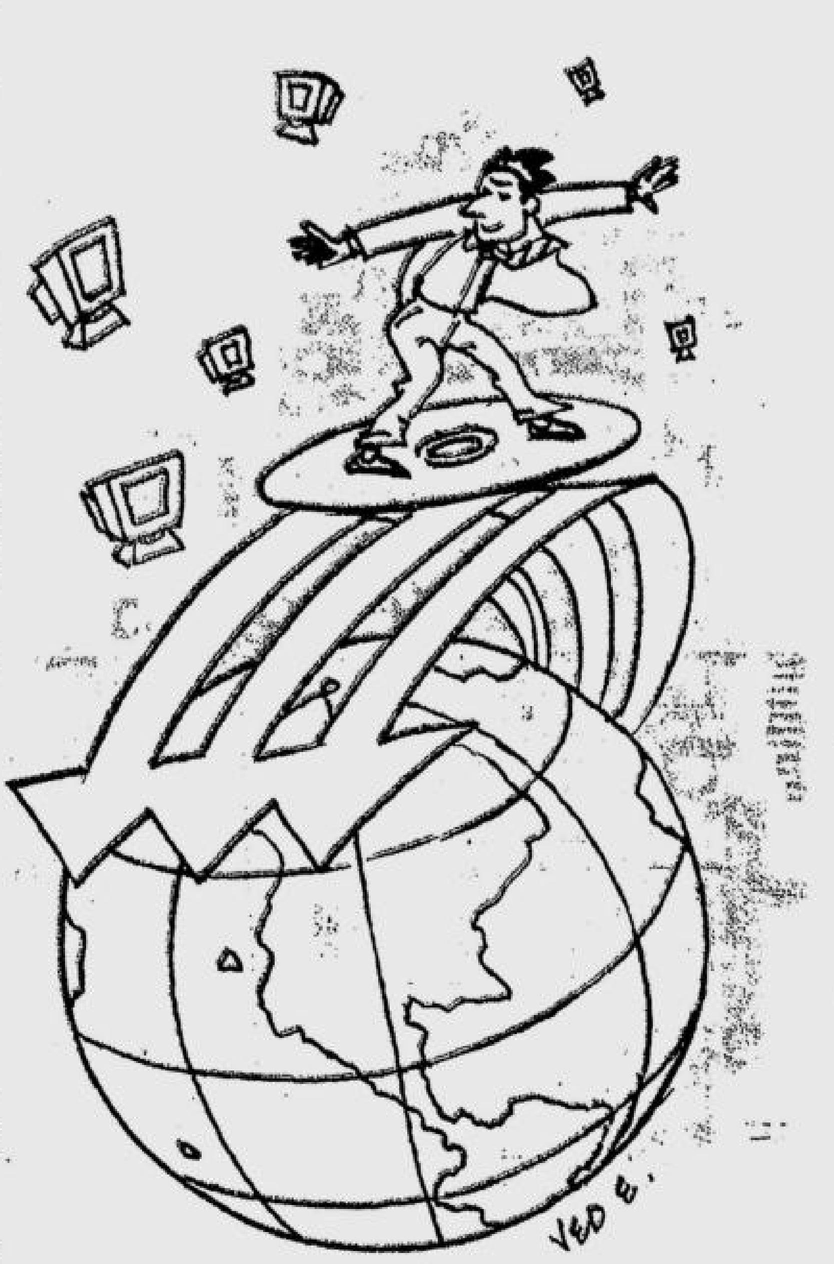


ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

Prediction: Two things: 1. Speech recognition will probably get into more mainstream use next year. There will be bugs to get rid of initially, but the demand is there and the hardware is finally up to par. 2. LCD (liquid crystal display) monitor prices will go below P20,000. While I consider it still far from practical, if it is looks you are after, a flat screen will definitely knock your socks off.

Gadgets galore

I anticipate that we will see more of two kinds of gadgets.

1. The all-in-one gadget. Phones that can be PDAs and vice versa,

PDAs with built-in cameras, PDAs that connect with your Instant Messenger, PDAs that are voice-recorders, music players and global positioning systems. Hey, while we're at it, why not throw in a shaver and stun gun as well? Seriously, we will have more PDA peripherals that will be compatible with any brand and less of those that work exclusively with one brand. The PDA is coming into its own, but if it wants to become a PC alternative, manufacturers would have to standardize. Does that mean that years from now we can also assemble PDAs using generic parts from Taiwan, the way we do PCs? When that happens, remember you heard it from me first.

For PDA software, next year will be a big test. Will WinCE grab the lead? Will Linux PDAs make a splash? Or will the good old Palm OS conquer all?

2. An accessory to a PC, which becomes a new gadget all by itself. This reminds me of the mini-component versus the all-in-one stereo wars of long ago. Audio jukeboxes that play all file types, connect to the Net and burn CDs are creating a new niche in the audio industry. Video editing machines are also in vogue. Inside, they also have processors and hard disks. These gadgets will gain some popularity, but I don't really see a future for them. The PC with its capacity for endless upgrades and a wide variety of applications will prevail in the end.

Gaming

Sony's PS2 is still on top, but Microsoft's XBox is a rocket ship waiting for the right pilot. Nintendo has been announcing some plans of its own for its Gamecube.

I'll be out on a limb here, but I believe the best and brightest games are still in PC land, which allows for a level of interaction, story depth, upgrade capability and video quality consoles can only dream of.

Prediction: Ever played Sims? Not only does it allow network play, but it also creates a "world" which can connect to another player's "world" until all hell breaks loose. Look for more games allowing interaction, where people need to work with one another, to share resources or achieve goals together, not just blast each other away.

Broadband and local networks

DotCom crash or not, one thing's for sure. There are more people on the Net now than ever. Whether you get your Internet juice from cable, the telephone company, or a satellite dish, expect cheaper and more interesting offerings.

All items mentioned have to do with the Internet, so the broadband provider stands to make some cash. However, it is historically difficult to become an ISP (Internet service provider) and earn from it, hence some creativity will be required.

Prediction: In the broadband industry, watch out for buy-outs with the big players gobbling up smaller companies. Also—this is more of a wish than a prediction—look for service offerings like local gaming servers that help make the use of international bandwidth more manageable.

E-mail the author at gary@exchange.ph

How I significantly reduced my cellulite

MAKE OVER
Kinny Salas

THAT title got your attention, didn't it? Like me, a lot of women, fat or thin, suffer from cellulite. Ever since I hit 16 it just started creeping up on me specifically at the back of my thighs and buttocks. I could be 15 pounds underweight but they wouldn't disappear. I would gain some weight and they would be more pronounced. They ranged from tolerable to offensive. I have come to several conclusions over the years.

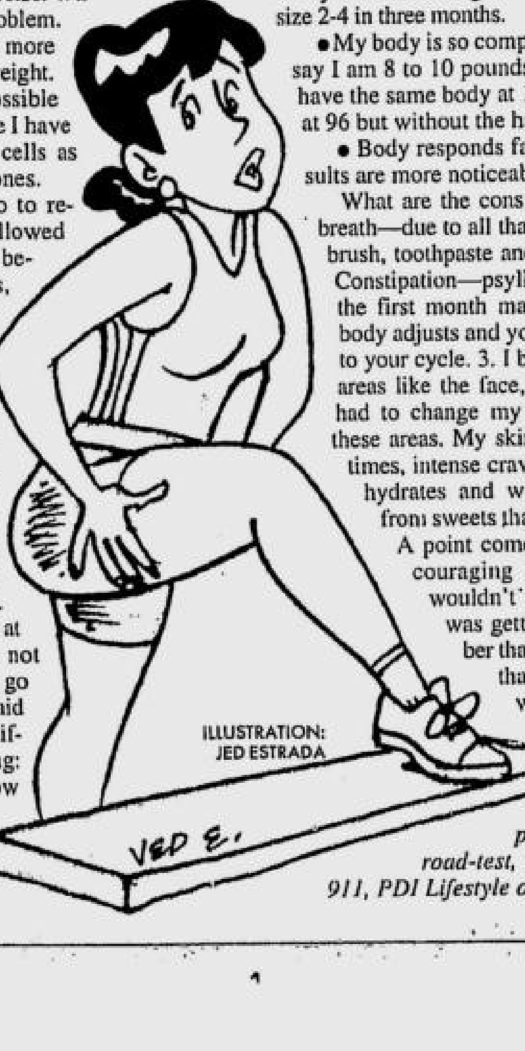
- Creams, soaps, gels and ointments that claim to get rid of them range from useless at worst to temporary at best.
- It is hereditary. If a direct relative has, chances are you will have, too. I have seen big women without them and skinny women who have. This is the case with me.
- They got worse a week before one's monthly period whether or not you exercise. Water retention aggravates the problem. Those who tend to bloat are more prone to them regardless of weight.
- It is biologically impossible for men to have them because I have read that men have flat fat cells as opposed to women's round ones.

So what exactly did I do to reduce them significantly? I followed a no-starvation diet. Now, before I tell you what the diet is, I strongly urge you to consult a doctor before starting this because each person has modifications to follow. Informing your doctor of your medications is advisable so he can make a specific diet for you. There is no one formula for every person. The diet is called "The New Atkins Diet Revolution" by Robert C. Atkins M.D. It is available at leading bookstores. I will not launch into my program and go into details because as I've said earlier, every person has different modifications. Warning: Following someone else's low carbohydrate and high protein diet without supervision might lead to a kidney shut down. I urge you to buy the book first and read the whole thing so you will understand your body and how and why the diet works. It is a light yellow book with turquoise, pink and purple letters. I have seen them at Page One and Powerbooks. If you are lazy to read, DO NOT proceed with the diet at all. Women have more limits than men.

Aside from reducing my cellulite, the diet has done the following for me:

- My hairstylists have noticed that my hair became thicker.
- The skin on my legs and arms has become silkier.
- I no longer bloat and my foot size has been reduced by a half size.
- For the first time in my life, my stomach and lower abs (*puson*) are now flat.
- My dress size has gone from a size 6 to 8 to a size 2-4 in three months.
- My body is so compact that people often say I am 8 to 10 pounds lighter than I am. I have the same body at 103 lbs., which I had at 96 but without the haggard face.
- Body responds faster to exercise. Results are more noticeable right away.

What are the cons of this diet? 1. Bad breath—due to all that meat. I bring toothbrush, toothpaste and floss in my bag. 2. Constipation—psyllium fiber tablets in the first month may be required. Your body adjusts and you eventually go back to your cycle. 3. I broke out on oily skin areas like the face, chest and back so I had to change my beauty products for these areas. My skin is clear now. 4. At times, intense cravings for more carbohydrates and withdrawal symptoms from sweets that made me cranky. 5. A point comes that it is very discouraging because my weight wouldn't budge but my body was getting smaller. Remember that muscles weigh more than fat. Eventually the weight will go down if you watch it.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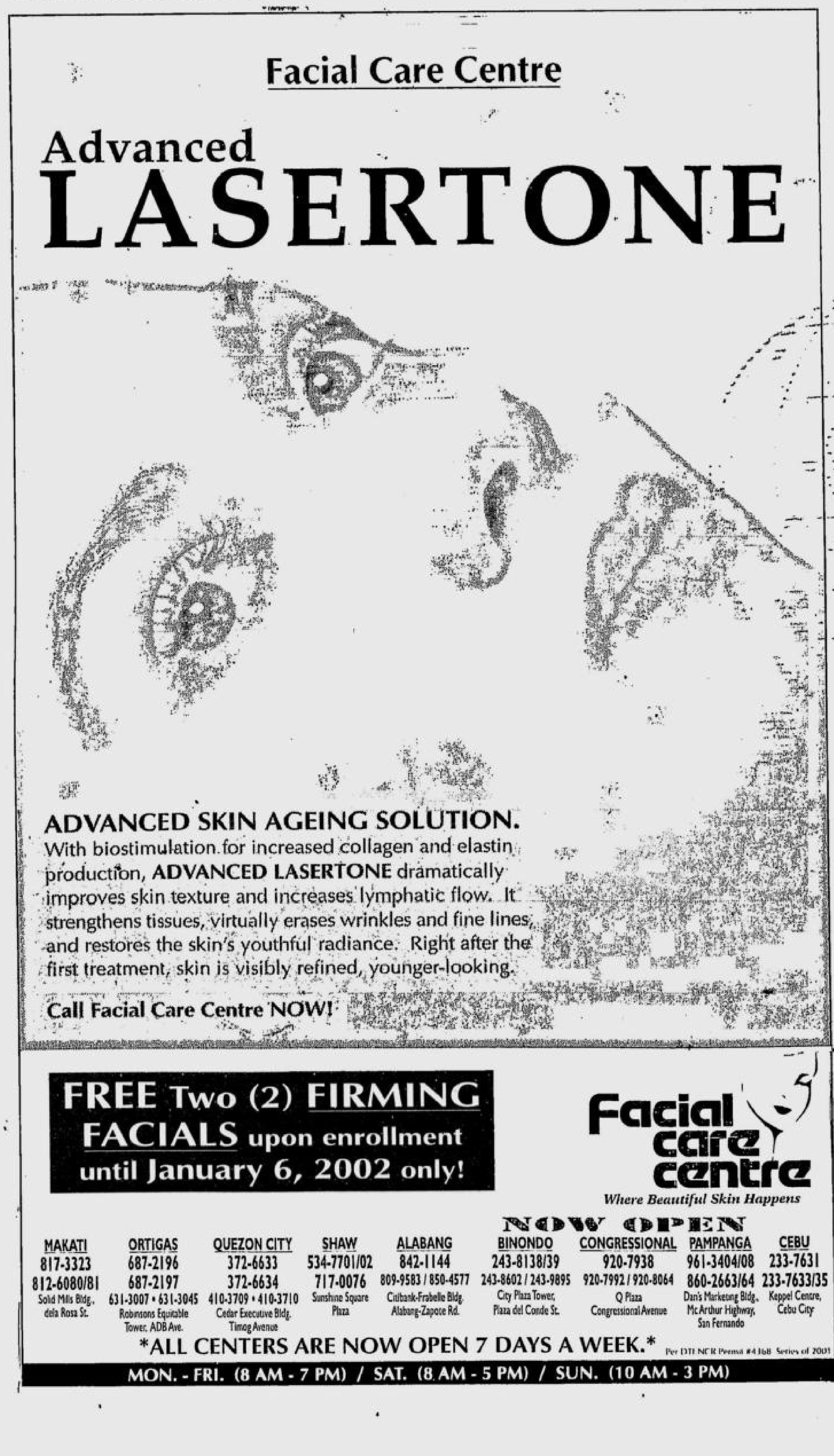
For any questions or products you want to road-test, write to Make Over 911, PDI Lifestyle or fax at 897-4805.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LIFESTYLE
2bU
to be young, to be young, to be you! To be you!

The future is texting you

BY PAM PASTOR

THE LURE of the new. It cannot be denied. Countless people keep giving in. Regardless of the economic crisis, regardless of when they last changed units, people desire the newest, sleekest cell phone model, and quite a number of them actually get it. They bask in momentary satisfaction—until the next model is released.

Following the law of supply and demand, more units just keep coming out. One must admit that there is an extremely high demand for Nokia phones in this country (Say cell phone snatchers 10 times fast). But the phones and their model numbers leave people both wistful and confused. Which model is what? What do the numbers mean? Which has WAP? Which has a radio? Which doesn't? Which phone is for me? Which phone should I hold out for?

Recently, Nokia Philippines held a training seminar for members of the media. It was during this event that they unveiled products that have yet to be released.

2bU! presents a guide to the next six Nokia phones 2002 has in store for avid texters. Find out which unit fits you and your lifestyle. Salivation guaranteed.

Nokia 8855

Phone book memory: 250

Special features: white backlight, analog watch, animations, SMS chat, WAP

Ideal user: the minimalist

Date of release: January 2002

For people who don't want to be overloaded with a phone that has too many functions but still want to make a stylish statement, the 8855 may just be the choice. It answers to both aesthetic and functional needs—sleek and elegant and at the same time providing the features that a simple user will deem necessary.

THE FUTURE/ p.D3

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AUTHENTIC FOSSIL

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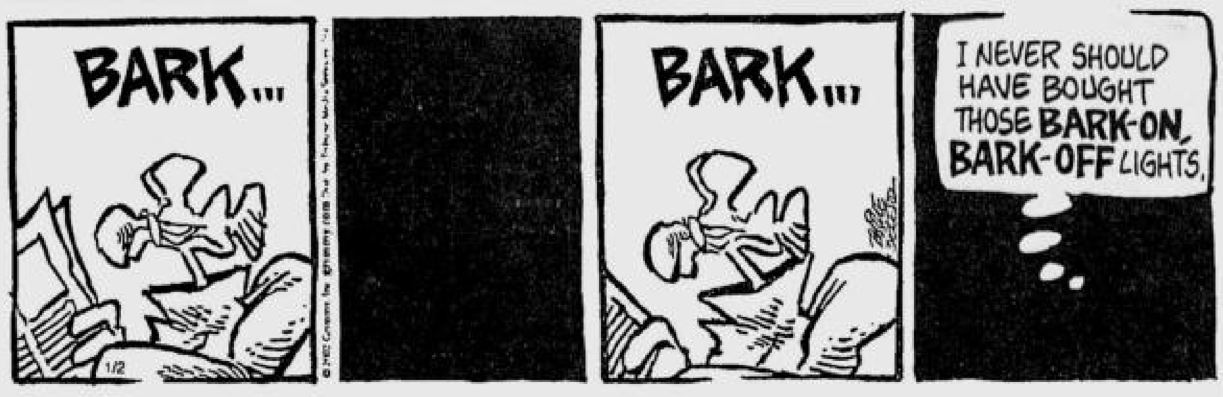
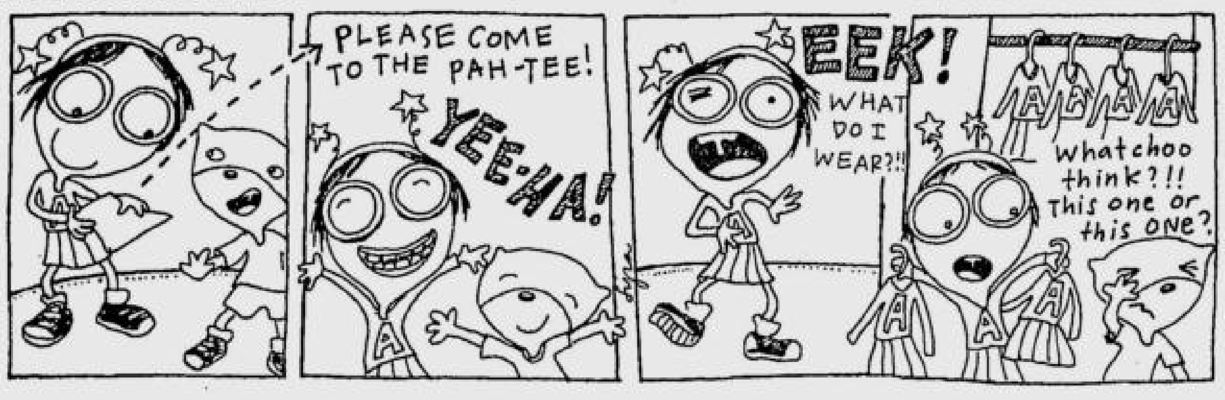
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


BARK...
BARK...
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE BOUGHT THOSE BARK-ON, BARK-OFF LIGHTS.
1/2

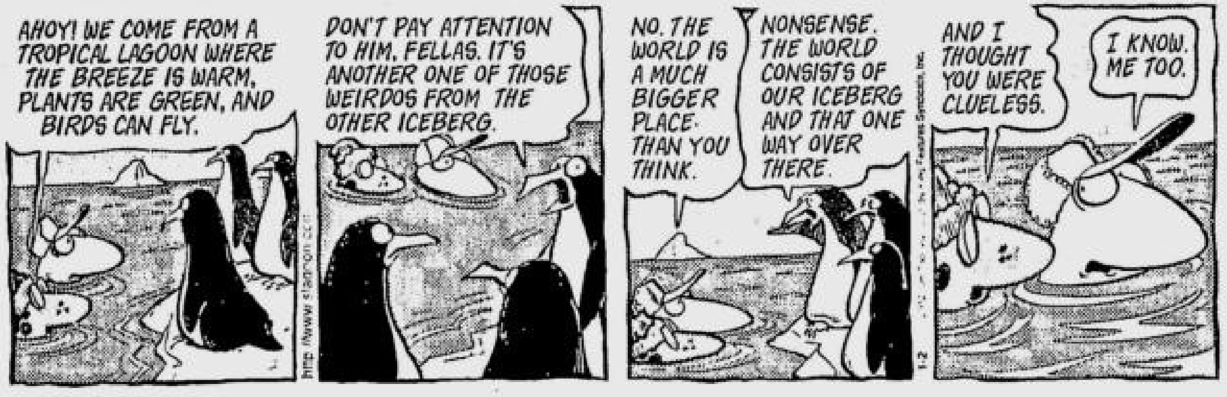
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


PLEASE COME TO THE PAH-TEE!
YEE-HA!
EEK!
WHAT DO I WEAR?!!
whatchoo think?!! This one or this one?

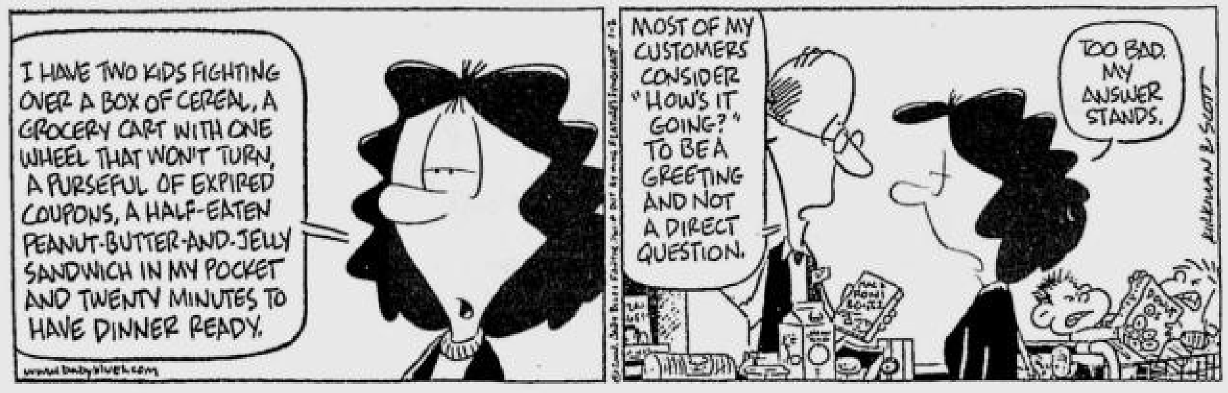
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


AHOY! WE COME FROM A TROPICAL LAGOON WHERE THE BREEZE IS WARM, PLANTS ARE GREEN, AND BIRDS CAN FLY.
DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO HIM, FELLAS. IT'S ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE WEIRDOS FROM THE OTHER ICEBERG.
NO. THE WORLD IS A MUCH BIGGER PLACE THAN YOU THINK.
NONSENSE. THE WORLD CONSISTS OF OUR ICEBERG AND THAT ONE WAY OVER THERE.
AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE CLUELESS.
I KNOW. ME TOO.

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I HAVE TWO KIDS FIGHTING OVER A BOX OF CEREAL, A GROCERY CART WITH ONE WHEEL THAT WON'T TURN, A PURSEFUL OF EXPIRED COUPONS, A HALF-EATEN PEANUT-BUTTER-AND-JELLY SANDWICH IN MY POCKET AND TWENTY MINUTES TO HAVE DINNER READY.
MOST OF MY CUSTOMERS CONSIDER "HOW'S IT GOING?" TO BE A GREETING AND NOT A DIRECT QUESTION.
TOO BAD. MY ANSWER STANDS.
www.babyblues.com
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Taye Diggs, Christy Turlington, Tia Carrere, Gabrielle Carteris

Happy Birthday: The sky's the limit this year. Don't sit around waiting for things to happen. Get busy pushing your ideas and standing up for your rights. Set your priorities and don't skip a beat while you race for the finish line. Your numbers are 9, 12, 17, 23, 26, 30

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't let anyone push you today. It's important that you take care of your own needs. Take part in discussions that you find interesting.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)): It is best to keep a low profile today. Don't overspend just because you have a little cash. Learn to live within your means.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Get out and have some fun. You've taken on a lot over the past year and you need to lift your spirits before you take on more.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): It's time to move toward a brighter future. You may be tempted to overreact regarding issues that arise. Keep your thoughts to yourself and you'll have no regrets.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You'll be sensitive to the things that others say to you today. Try not to jump to conclusions. You will surprise others with your insightful responses.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Stick as close to the truth as possible and you will find yourself being looked up to by others. You can move into a position of leadership.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): As long as you keep your thoughts to yourself, you will discover that everything else will run smoothly. If you are inclined to challenge others you can expect to engage in a serious debate.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): If your personal life has been hindering you, it may be time to sort out the outstanding issues with loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You'll be happy to get started today. The busier you are the better you will feel about your future.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You may be a little confused regarding your future direction. Take time to organize your thoughts and determine what it is that you really want.

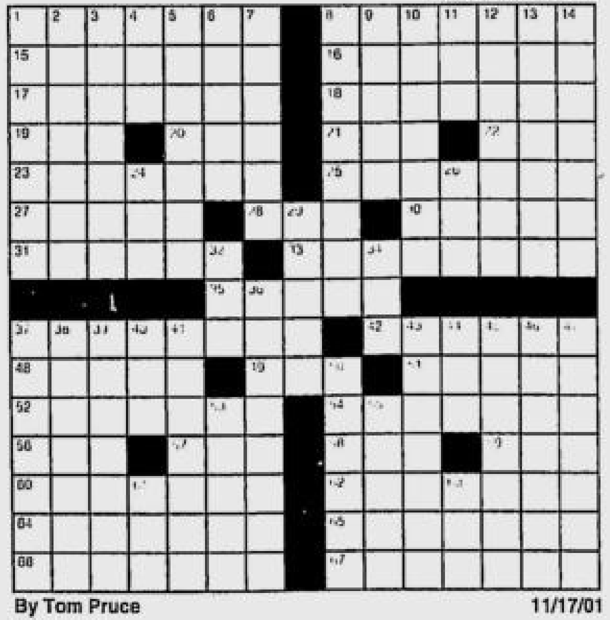
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): It's time to renew some of your old contacts. Let others know what you are up to.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): This is the time to reevaluate your past, present and future. The more thought you put into what it is you want to do the more satisfaction you will receive.

Birthday Baby: You've got the drive, the intelligence and the charisma to do whatever you want. You are daring, outgoing and sometimes controversial. You have what it takes to be a leader.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

11/17/01

ACROSS
1 With a leg on each side
8 Purely external
15 Particularly selective
16 One making assertions
17 Soup starter
18 Bolivian currency
19 Exasperate
20 Up to, briefly
21 Emmet
22 Morning lawn moisture
23 Brief summation
25 Long lookers
27 Frame for a false rap
28 Mai __ cocktail
30 Employ again
31 "Jeopardy" host Alex
33 Sweet, dark syrup
35 Man from Teheran
37 Woodstock folk singer
42 Grasslands of Argentina
48 Invalidate
49 DDE's election rival
51 Intrinsically
52 Lehrer's former partner
54 Most spacious
56 Colonial black cuckoo
57 "Exodus" hero
58 Moo __ gai pan
59 Place
60 Conceives
62 Catch
64 Satisfied
65 Helmsman
66 Brightest star in Scorpio
67 Examiners

DOWN
1 Superlatively sore
2 More distinct
3 1992 U.S. Open golf champion
4 Stick up
5 Carbon-14, for example
6 Durable fabric
7 Button slot
8 Event
9 Full of: suff.
10 Trumpet blast
11 Punster
12 Milos Forman's Oscar-winning film
13 Backwards gear
14 Periods of half-sleep
24 Place for three men
26 Notes of scales
29 Flabbergast
32 Sephia car maker
34 Kind of gloss or service
36 Down-to-earth types
37 Kingston's island
38 Continuously
39 Very old
40 Holy sister
41 Sheep, sometimes
43 Places side by side
44 Gibson of "The Year of Living Dangerously"
45 Get ready
46 Confidence builder
47 Irish dogs
50 Wisest
53 Greek goddess of peace
55 __ Carlo
61 One-time link
63 Bottom line

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

P	O	D	S	■	M	A	P	L	E	■	G	Y	R	O
A	G	O	G	■	I	L	I	A	D	■	R	O	E	G
N	E	W	T	A	L	E	N	T	S	E	E	K	E	R
S	E	N	■	S	E	C	T	S	■	P	E	E	V	E
■	■	U	S	S	R	■	■	■	S	E	N	S	E	S
T	O	N	T	O	S	H	O	R	S	E	■	■	■	■
E	L	D	E	R	■	A	R	E	S	■	A	R	T	E
C	L	E	A	T	■	L	I	T	■	A	R	I	E	L
H	A	R	K	■	P	E	E	R	■	V	E	N	A	L
■	■	■	■	G	I	R	L	O	R	E	A	G	L	E
A	L	L	S	E	T	■	■	■	U	R	S	A	■	■
M	I	A	T	A	■	C	O	A	L	S	■	B	O	B
O	B	S	E	R	V	E	T	H	E	E	N	E	M	Y
C	R	E	W	■	I	N	T	E	R	■	A	L	O	T
O	A	R	S	■	A	T	O	M	S	■	S	L	O	E

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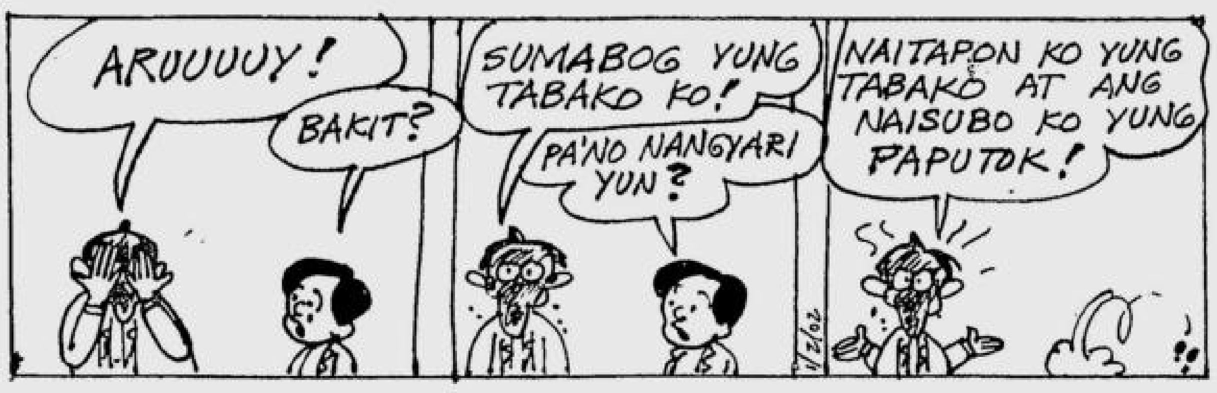
11/17/01

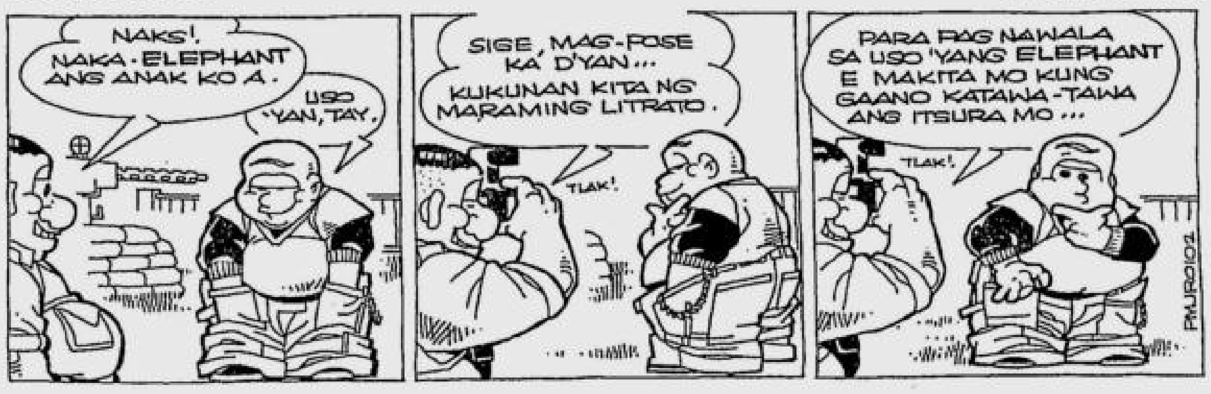
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ARUUUUY!
BAKIT?
SUMABOG YUNG TABAKO KO!
PA'NO NANGYARI YUN?
NAITAPON KO YUNG TABAKO AT ANG NAISUBO KO YUNG PAPUTOK!
1/2/02

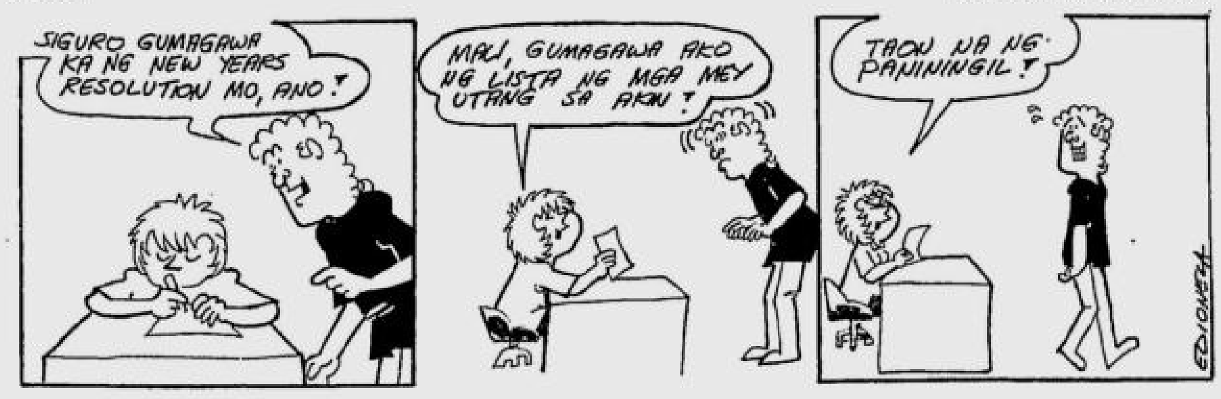
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAKS!. NAKA-ELEPHANT ANG ANAK KO A.
USO 'YAN, TAY.
SIGE, MAG-POSE KA D'YAN... KUKUNAN KITA NG MARAMING LITRATO.
TLAK!
PARA PAG NAWALA SA USO 'YANG ELEPHANT E MAKITA MO KUNG GAANO KATAWA-TAWA ANG ITSURA MO...
TLAK!
PMJR010102

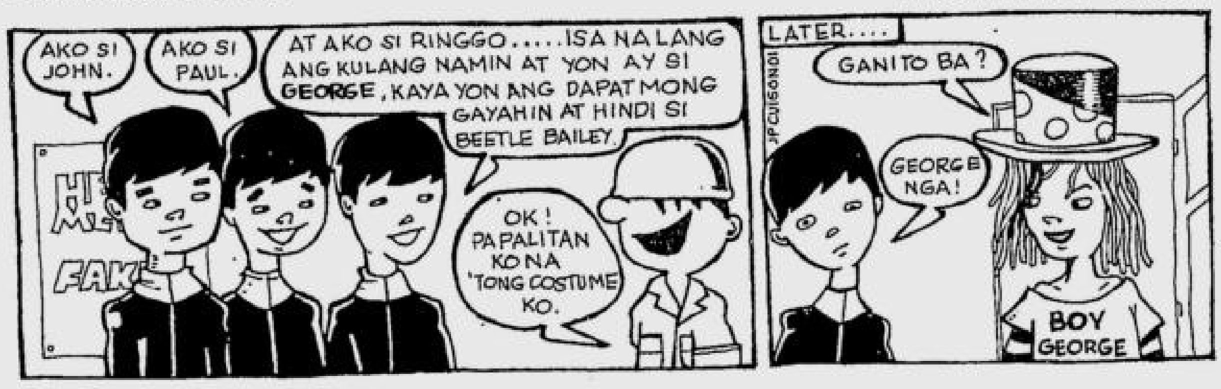
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


SIGURO GUMAGAWA KA NG NEW YEARS RESOLUTION MO, ANO?
MALI, GUMAGAWA AKO NG LISTA NG MGA MEY UTANG SA AKIN!
TAON NA NG PANININGIL!
EDIONELA

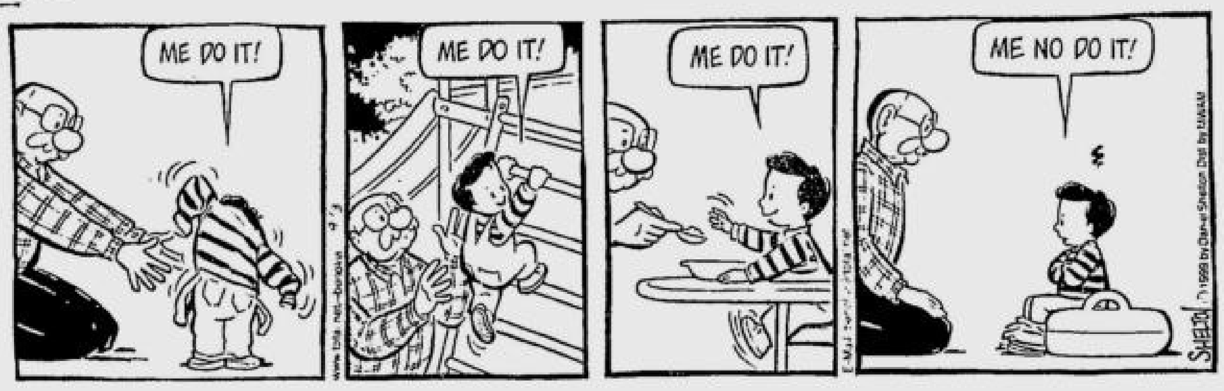
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


AKO SI JOHN.
AKO SI PAUL.
AT AKO SI RINGGO.....ISA NA LANG ANG KULANG NAMIN AT YON AY SI GEORGE, KAYA YON ANG DAPAT MONG GAYAHIN AT HINDI SI BEETLE BAILEY.
OK! PAPALITAN KO NA 'TONG COSTUME KO.
LATER....
GANITO BA?
GEORGE NGA!
BOY GEORGE
JPCUISON01

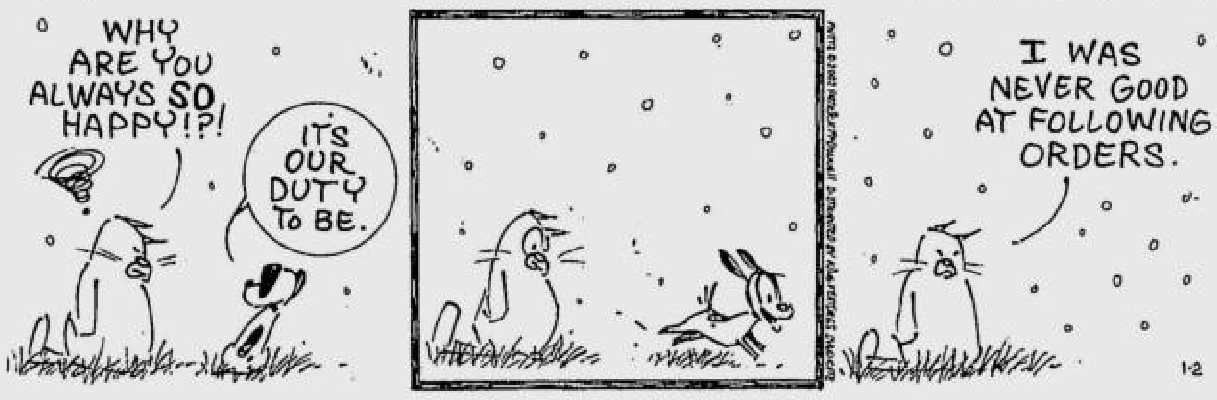
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


ME DO IT!
ME DO IT!
ME DO IT!
ME NO DO IT!
SHELTON

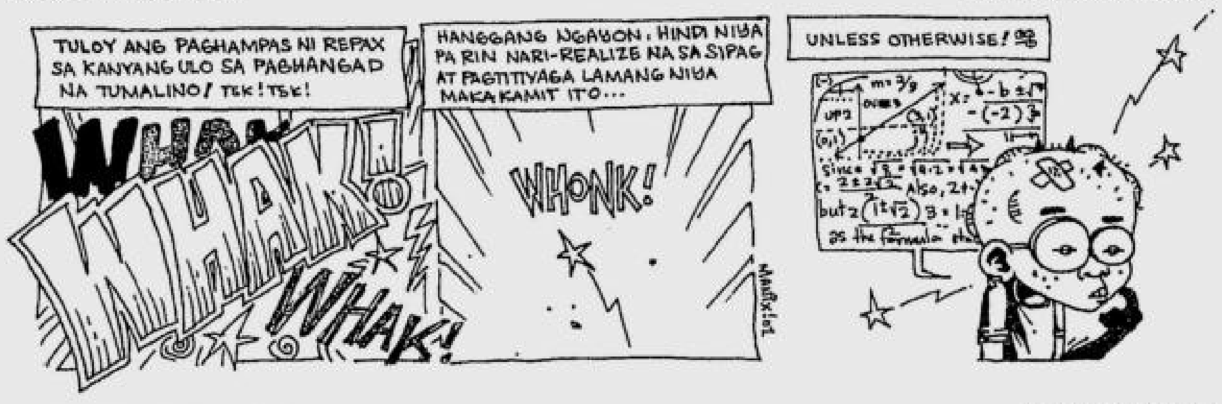
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS SO HAPPY!?!
IT'S OUR DUTY TO BE.
I WAS NEVER GOOD AT FOLLOWING ORDERS.
1-2

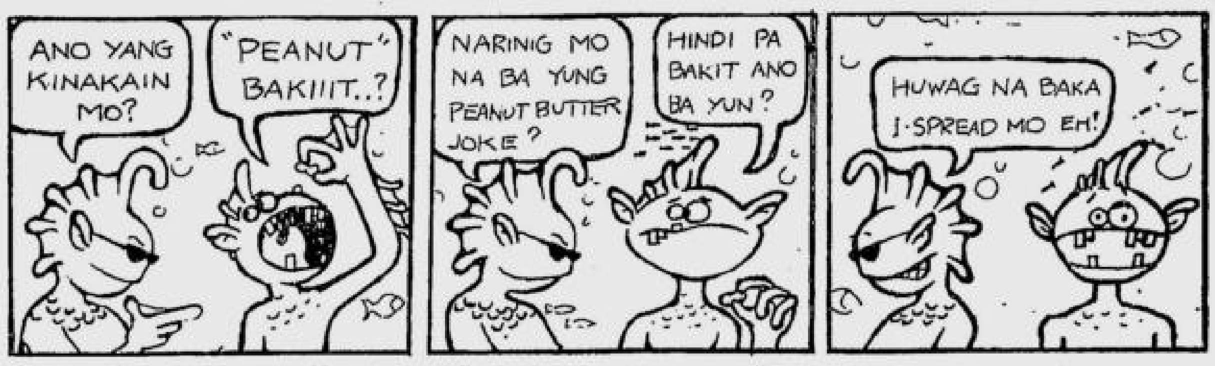
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TULOY ANG PAGHAMPAS NI REPAX SA KANYANG ULO SA PAGHANGAD NA TUMALINO! TEK! TEK!
WHAK!
WHAK!
WHAK!
HANGGANG NGAYON, HINDI NIYA PA RIN NARI-REALIZE NA SA SIPAG AT PAGTITIYAGA LAMANG NIYA MAKAKAMIT ITO...
WHONK!
UNLESS OTHERWISE!
ManixLet

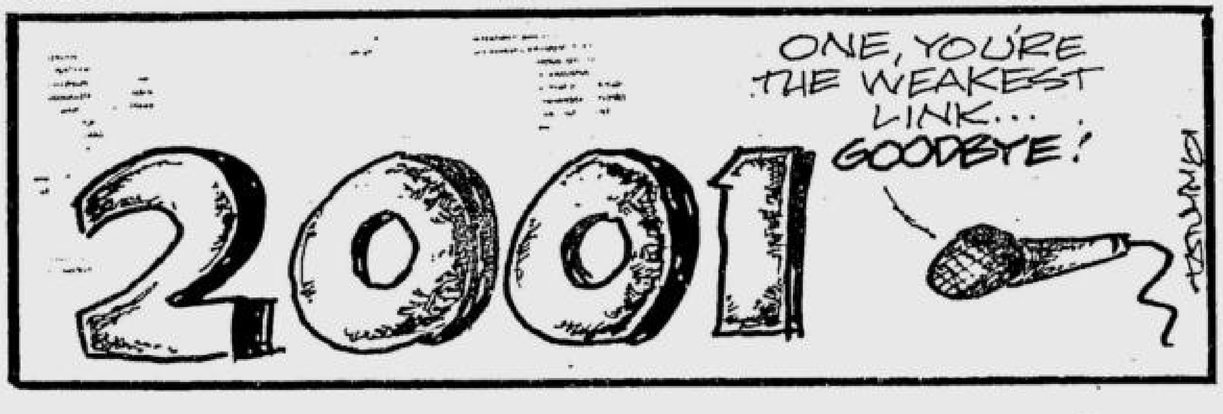
CHICHOY CHOKOY

BY IKOY RICIO


ANO YANG KINAKAIN MO?
"PEANUT" BAKIIIT..?
NARINIG MO NA BA YUNG PEANUT BUTTER JOKE?
HINDI PA BAKIT ANO BA YUN?
HUWAG NA BAKA I-SPREAD MO EH!

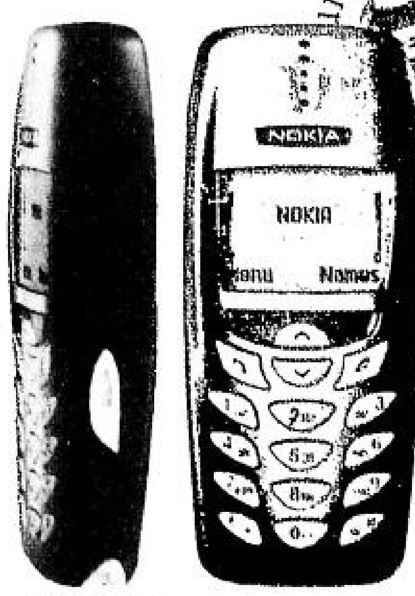
TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


ONE, YOU'RE THE WEAKEST LINK... GOODBYE!
2001

The future is texting you

(From page D1)



Nokia 3350

Special features: picture editor, personalized SMS alert, rhythmic backlight, three new games—Link5, Dance2Music and Magic Draw

Ideal user: the creative

Date of release: early 2002

Don't you just hate it how you automatically reach for your phone when you hear that familiar beep-beep only to realize that it's the man beside you who has just received a new message? The 3350 will help you say goodbye to that experience. You can use a ringing tone as an SMS alert or create your own—no more false alarms. This phone also has a picture editor, three new games, WAP and a rhythmic backlight that "dances" to your ringing tone when someone calls.

Nokia 5210

Phone book memory: 250

Special features: top-and-bottom shell, amber backlight, thermometer, stopwatch, timer, picture editor

Ideal user: the active and athletic

Date of release: March 2002

Athletic people, say hello to the 5210. Especially made for active users, the 5210 offers a rubbery cover that gives your phone extra protection. This cover will make producers of fake Nokia accessories sweat. Unlike your usual Xpress-on Covers that you have to pry off, the 5210's cover can best be likened to those plastic eggs you used to play with during Easter as a kid or the tube-like pencil cases you had in grade school—you have to pull the top-and-bottom shell apart, leaving you with the tiny skeleton of your phone. The difference does not end with the cover. Instead of your standard yellow-green backlight or the 8250's bright blue light, the 5210 has an amber-colored glow. Its calendar has a view-by-two-weeks feature. Another new thing this unit will offer is the picture editor. Think Etch-a-Sketch. You no longer have to send those generic picture messages. Aside from clip arts, you can make your own little drawings on your phone and send them to your friends. This phone also has Infrared, a thermometer, a stopwatch and is WAP-enabled.

Nokia 7650

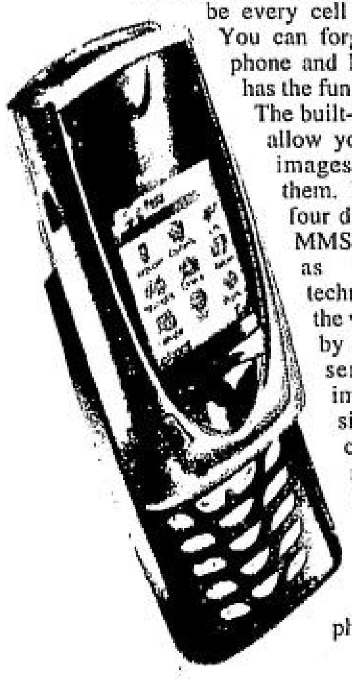
Special features: GPRS, HSCSD, Infrared, Bluetooth, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) functions, e-mail browser, built-in digital camera, Multi-Media Messaging (MMS), large color graphical display, photo album, 5-way joystick, voice recorder

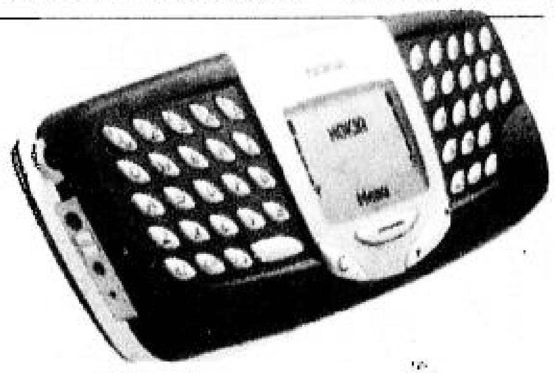
Ideal users: the techie

Date of release: second quarter of 2002 (late May or early June)

A definite jaw-dropper, the 7650 might just be every cell phone-hound's dream. You can forget about lugging your phone and PDA around—the 7650 has the functions of both and more. The built-in camera does not only allow you to capture and store images, you may also send them. Images may be sent in four different ways—send via MMS, Infrared, Bluetooth or as an e-mail. MMS technology will revolutionize the way people communicate by allowing you to create, send and receive text, images and voice clips in a single message. The 7650 can download games, ringing tones, profiles and graphics via WAP.

There you have it. Now on to the bigger issue—how to save moolah for your dream phone.





Nokia 5510

Phone book memory: 100

Special features: Digital Music Player, Nokia Audio Manager, FM radio, Qwerty keyboard

Ideal user: the music and game lover

Date of release: December 2001

Cell phone fans were still reeling over the sleek 8310 when the Nokia 5510 was made available in the market a few weeks ago. Offering more than just SMS technology, the 5510 might just be *the* tool for mobile entertainment. Music and games—these are the two key words. The unit's Digital Music Player allows you to "record" and store two hours of music from the radio, CDs and MP3s. You may also download music from the Internet. This feature adapts an advanced audio coding technology—a file format smaller than your MP3. The Nokia Audio Manager will help organize your music files both in your PC and phone. Similar to how you customize your Winamp, skins for your Audio Manager may be downloaded from Club Nokia. In the case of this phone, smaller is not necessarily better. The qwerty keyboard makes text-messaging easier and faster (but you have to unlearn your texting skills first) and games can be played with two hands (Can you say Game Gear?) Additional game levels may be downloaded via WAP.

Nokia 6510

Phone book memory: 500, with multiple fields per name

Special features: General Packet Radio Services (GPRS), High Speed Circuit Switched Data (HSCSD), FM radio, voice commands, voice recording, PC Suite, mobile wallet

Ideal user: the executive

Date of release: first quarter of 2002

This tiny phone is loaded with giant features. GPRS insures fast WAP browsing and use of e-mail while the built-in HSCSD modem that may be connected to a compatible laptop via Infrared makes for a more convenient mode of data transmission, downloading of files and e-mailing. The 6510 introduces the mobile wallet which provides convenience for users who make WAP transactions. This feature makes it possible to store credit card information on your phone (which would of course be protected by your PIN code). The PC Suite allows you to synchronize data in your mobile phone and PC. Aside from the big memory (it can store 150 text messages), the 6510 has a higher resolution and a light blue backlight that's easy on the eyes.

E-mail the author at cookiedoughjunkie @yahoo.com.

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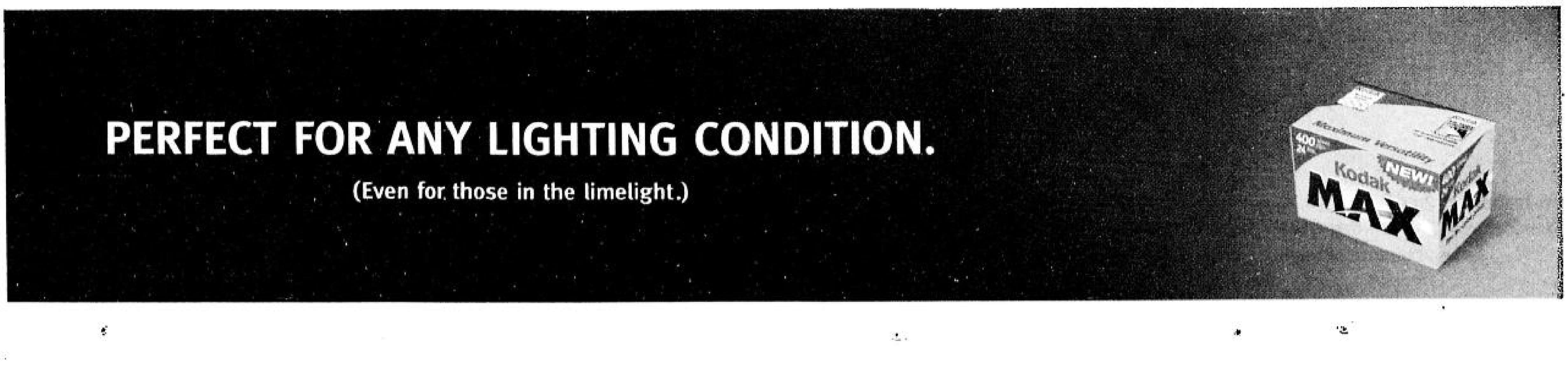
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3796, Series of 2001
Yan ang galing... without overspending!
SMART



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NOKIA
CONNECTING PEOPLE
NOKIA
The new Nokia 3350 with Picture Editor. Out this January.
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3350

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New features: Picture Editor that lets you draw your own picture messages • Personalized Text Alert Tone • 3 New Games – Dance2Music, Link & Magic Draw • Automatic Keyguard • Repeated Alarm • New Xpress-on™ Color Covers **Other features:** Phonebook Memory for up to 150 names and numbers • Animated Profile Logos • Composer • Long Text Messages (459 characters) • SMS Chat

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